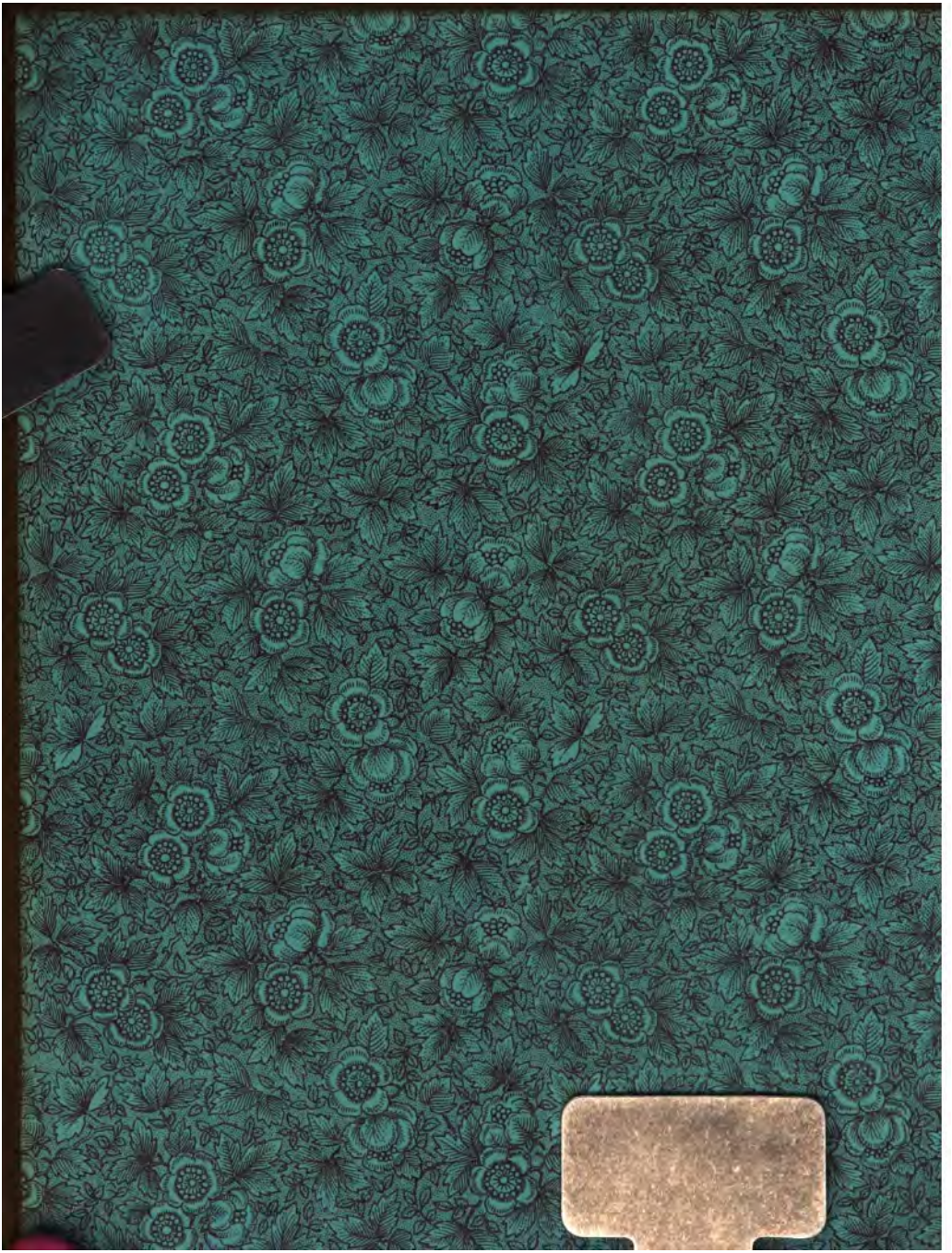

THE KNIGHT AND THE DWARF
A
FAIRY TALE
BY
CHAS MILLS



THE KNIGHT AND THE DWARF.

THE KNIGHT'S DEPARTURE.

THE

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A Fairy Tale

BY

CHARLES [illegible]ELLS

ILLUSTRATED BY [illegible] M. [illegible]

London

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CHARLES MILLS

ILLUSTRATED BY T. M. LINDSAY.

London
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1882

CONTENTS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE AUTHOR

DEDICATES THIS FAIRY TALE TO HIS DEAR BOY,

AT WHOSE REQUEST, AND FOR WHOSE ENTERTAINMENT,

IT WAS WRITTEN.

THE KNIGHT AND THE DWARF.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

On yonder hill a castle standes
With walles and towres bedight,
And yonder lives the child of Elle,
A young and comely knighte.

In the year of Grace one thousand two hundred and twenty, the rivalry between Guelfs and Ghibelins, which

had thrown Germany into confusion, had happily terminated, and Frederick the Second—who had been crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle by the Archbishop of Mentz—remained in peaceable possession as King and Emperor.

Prince Siegfried, whose adventures we are about to relate, lived in a castle which looked down from its craggy height upon the winding, glorious Rhine. He was too young to have taken part in the war between the rival claimants—Otho and Frederick; and though he had not entirely escaped the contagion of the Children's Crusade, led by Nicholas of Cologne, he had, fortunately, been restrained from joining in that foolish and fatal expedition, the declared object of which was to win the Holy Land, not by victorious arms, but by the peaceful conversion of the Moslem. Ah! how many nobles, whose castles frowned upon the Rhine, had lost their misguided children in that disastrous enterprise—children whom they saw for the last time on earth when they started on their ill-starred enterprise.

The Prince had, however, won his spurs in the knightly jousts so common in that chivalrous age, and he prided himself more upon his knighthood than his more august title of prince; and it was in deference to this predilection that he was commonly addressed as Sir

Knight. He was of courteous manners and dignified bearing; was fired by an ardent desire for travel and adventure, and had often regretted having been debarred the gratification of it by the troublous times in which his youth was passed. This craving for knightly exploits had been fostered by the recital of the heroic acts of his ancestors, and by the narration of the brave deeds done at Ascalon and Tiberias. Being thus actuated by a strong desire to escape the monotony of his present life, the Knight lost no opportunity of urging his wish upon the Princess, his only surviving parent, who at length consented, though reluctantly, to gratify it. It was accordingly arranged that Siegfried, accompanied by his intimate friend, von Eckel—who was a Count of the Empire—should set out in quest of those adventures which were regarded with so much pride and interest by the nobility of that age. Nor could a more judicious choice of a companion have been made; for the two had been intimate from childhood, and had shared each other's thoughts and aspirations. They possessed, as was to be expected under such circumstances, many qualities in common, both being equally distinguished by a frank and winning courtesy. It spoke much for the Prince that his natural openness and generosity of character had not been spoilt

by the subservience of attendants, or the flattery of friends.

No sooner was it announced to Siegfried that he was at length to gratify the desire he had so long entertained than he gave expression to the most lively satisfaction. He entered with the greatest interest into the preparations necessary for his journey, and busied his fancy in picturing the scenes through which he should pass, and the adventures he hoped to encounter. Many were the conversations of the two friends, who seemed to vie with each other in the liveliness of their fancy and the ardour of their anticipations. They appeared, indeed, to be fired with the enthusiasm that inflamed the breast of the redoubted knight-errant, Don Quixote. Had the immortal adventures of Cervantes' hero then been given to the world, we could have imagined Siegfried exclaiming to his friend: "I shall be the Knight of La Mancha, and thou his faithful companion." Not that the Count was to occupy towards his friend a position similar to that of the famed Sancho Panza, who was the servant as well as the intimate of Don Quixote.

You will be unable to appreciate these fervid anticipations of adventure unless you bear in mind the age in which Siegfried and his friend lived, and strive

to realise, partially at least, its national and social characteristics. For instance, you must not imagine that telegraphs or post-offices, railways or steamboats—nay, that even stage coaches or cabs—were known in those days. No one had ever dreamed of such things, and, considering what dreamers people were six centuries and a half ago, this is saying much, for dreams were then believed to foreshadow future events. Nor was this belief confined to the illiterate—a class which included the great majority of persons; for except the clergy, the monks, and the nobility, scarcely any could either read or write, whilst all were equally ignorant of true science. In those days even the educated regarded the earth as flat, and scouted the idea—said to have been broached by some hare-brained fellow or other—of its being round. This notion was, of course, laughed at by everybody who knew anything, or nothing, about the matter.

But, as we were saying, dreams were considered, in the thirteenth century, as of grave portent. People who had slept unsoundly and dreamed unpleasant dreams, did not ask themselves what had disagreed with them at supper, but were as much concerned to discover an interpretation of their visions as was Belshazzar to decipher the strange writing on the wall,

or Pharaoh to learn the meaning of the fat and the lean kine. We meet with many accounts of such dreams, and of the interpretations thereof, in the monkish chronicles of that age; but it invariably happens that the relation came *after* the occurrence of the events to which the dream was supposed to have reference. But although people were very ignorant and consequently very superstitious—for the latter is always a sign of the former—they had nevertheless the advantage of possessing a ballad poetry full of tenderness and heroism. The poets who composed these ballads were called Minnie-singers, and their songs were sung at Court and in castle-hall by wandering minstrels. If you have read Sir Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* you will have gathered some notion of their character and their calling. Besides the love-songs of these later singers, they had two poems of greater celebrity than all the rest, the *Song of the Nibelungen*, and the *Hero-book*. The latter relates the strange adventures of a dwarf-king called Laurin, who was possessed of a magic ring and girdle, which gave him the strength of twenty-four men, and of a cloak by which he could render himself invisible at pleasure. This dwarf-king lived in a mountain, and clothed himself in the most magnificent armour. He was, however, conquered by

a knight called Dietrich, and was at last compelled to earn his bread by becoming a buffoon.

But the *Song of the Nibelungen* is still more wonderful, for it tells how a princess was won by a noble knight by the aid of Albrich the Dwarf, who, like the other, had a mantle of invisibility. This knight performed many great achievements. He rode to the Court of Worms, accompanied by twelve champions, and there displayed great skill and bravery in the tournaments and knightly exercises held before the King, for whom he afterwards fought and secured many victories. He returned from the wars, and wooed and won a lovely princess.

You will readily believe what favourites these songs were with all classes of the people, and how much they influenced those who sang or heard them. We in England had, as you know, ballads of a similar kind, which were sung by harpers or minstrels,—one of the most celebrated being that of *Chevy Chase.* This describes the encounter between Earl Percy and Earl Douglas ; and if you have read it you will know how spirit-stirring these old ballads were. Now, Siegfried had often listened to the minnie-singers, and his heart had been stirred by the recital of heroic deeds in which knights, like himself, had rescued distressed princesses

and ladies. But besides minstrels, there was in those days a class of men whose occupation it was to amuse the nobles, whom they served, by their wit and homely

jests. Such a one was Elberich the Dwarf, who was a great favourite with Siegfried, by reason of his lively parts. His stature was thirty inches. Although he had reached the age of manhood he was beardless; and

when he mimicked, as he often did, the airs of his superiors, the effect was extremely ludicrous. He had a very wide mouth; but, as if to make the contrast more strange, his nose was absurdly small even for *his* face, and had a decided tendency upwards. Add to these peculiarities a hump-back, bandy-legs, and large feet, and you have a portrait of the Prince's only other travelling companion.

At length the day for the Prince's departure arrived, and Siegfried and the Count, mounted on their palfreys, clad in armour and wearing a sword and kind of dagger, set out on their journey attended by the Dwarf, who, mounted on a Jerusalem pony, followed them with mock solemnity.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRANSFORMATION.

"Thus was th' accomplish'd Dwarf endued
With gifts and knowledge, per'lous shrewd."

"O, who can tell
The hidden power of herbs, and might of magic spell!"

THE morning was bright and balmy—such a morning as one has a right to expect in the month of June in the pleasant Rhine-land. It was a morning to make the aged forget their years—and youth, with all its flow of spirits and boisterous vigour—a season of happy hope and intense enjoyment. Siegfried gave vent to his joyousness in snatches of song that told of youth's wild dream and love's delicious enchantment—songs learnt in the nursery, in castle-hall, and at jousts and tourneys. Nor was the Count less blithesome than his friend, for he was as free from care as the birds which carolled their sweet lays on this bright summer morn. On through flowery meads and shady woods they passed,

full of gaiety and hopefulness. Listen to Siegfried, as, with voice well attuned, he sings these verses from the *Song of the Nibelungen* :—[1]

" He was full bravely harness'd,
Himself he knightly bore,
With buckler and with helmet,
Which bright enough he wore :

" And, bound above his hauberk,
A weapon broad was seen,
That cut with both its edges,
Was never sword so keen.

" Then hither he and thither
Search'd for the Ferryman,
He heard a splashing of waters,
To watch the same he 'gan ;

" It was the white Mer-women,
That in a fountain clear,
To cool their fair bodyes,
Were merrily bathing here."

He stopped short in his song, and exclaimed : " Come, come, Elberich, thou makest but an indifferent companion on this our journey ! Methinks thy wits—if indeed thou lay'st claim to any—are wool-gathering, and thy thoughts bent upon some fair form thou left this morn. How say'st thou ?"

[1] The translation is Carlyle's.

"Sith it so please you, Sir Knight," replied the Dwarf, "I can trill a song as musically as can my betters."

"Well said," returned the Prince. "Listen, Count, to Elberich's song."

Thereupon the Dwarf sang, with great spirit, the following ditty :—

There's none can vie in love with him
  Who gains renown afar ;
For ladies fair, both young and old,
  Love knights who've been in war.

And glory won in distant land,
  In strife with alien foe,
Increases as it speeds along—
  Like rolling stone in snow.

What tales of mighty paladins
  The hero can relate !
What heroism he has seen
  In the lowly and the great !

What pictures he can draw of lands
  Across the distant main !
What wonders he can tell to ears
  Which list to hear again.

And then in soft and amorous tone,
  He tells the old, old tale,
That maidens long, but blush, to hear :
  Be sure he will not fail.

For knights are bold in love and war,
  And pluck the lovely rose,
Which timid hearts, though fain to win,
  By hesitating lose.

The Dwarf was complimented upon the manner in which he had acquitted himself.

"'Tis a marvel, truly," said Siegfried, "how thy little head can hold so much wit."

"Ah! Sir Knight," replied Elberich, "dame Nature often compensates for bodily infirmities by mental gifts."

"Is it not," asked the Count, "that those who are unfitted for knightly exercises often seek diversion in learning, in which they accordingly excel their more fortunate brethren?"

"Well said, Count," said the Prince. "And so, Elberich, give the credit of thy learning to assiduity rather than to talent. 'Tis the tortoise that aye wins the race."

"And yet how often it happens," said the Dwarf, "that men prize least that which they possess, and crave what they lack. You, Sir Knight, thirst for adventures that are worthless when achieved; whilst such as I are envious of personal prowess."

"Tut, tut, Elberich," remarked the Prince; "this talk befits the cloister, not the field."

"Aye, Sir Knight," replied the Dwarf, "we are apt to believe that our monks should perform for us the duty we owe to Heaven, whilst we are benevolent enough to supplement our own enjoyment by the pleasures they are supposed to eschew."

"Ah! ah!" laughed the Prince; "our Elberich is an ecclesiastic in disguise. But be sure when thou quit'st the castle for the cloister, to bargain for the office of cellarer."

The Dwarf and the Count both laughed heartily at this witty sally, and thus with song and repartee they beguiled their journey until they reached the convent where they were to refresh themselves. On arriving at the gate the Dwarf rang the bell, and on the appearance of the porter made known to him the rank of Siegfried and the Count, whereupon they were led into the Abbot's hall; whilst Elberich was taken into the guest-hall to be entertained by the hospitaller. The Abbot, as in duty bound, entertained the two friends, and gave them a hearty welcome. He was, indeed, fond of dispensing the hospitalities of his position, being himself partial to good living, and of an amiable and social temperament. He was a man of medium stature, well built, bald, and cleanly shaven. He had a prominent nose, and bright piercing eyes. His bearing was

THE ABBOT SHOWING HIS TREASURES.

courteous and dignified. He showed his guests the treasures of his convent—the costly chasubles, silver croziers and censers, sandals with silken leggings, silk caps, a golden cross, dalmatics, and, most precious of all, books ornamented with gold. The latter were richly illuminated and beautifully written, for, as you know, printing had not then been invented. Siegfried and the Count (as well as Elberich, who had stolen unbidden into the apartment) examined these treasures with great interest, and were especially interested in some relics recently brought from the Holy Land by the Crusaders. Their curiosity charmed the Abbot, whilst they were equally delighted with the readiness with which he gratified it.

Then came dinner, which passed off very pleasantly, for the Abbot was a man full of anecdote, and entertained his guests by relating how the relics had come into the possession of his convent.

Meanwhile the Dwarf was having an agreeable time of it in the guest-house, for the hospitaller discovered a temperament as lively as that of Elberich himself. As soon as the latter had satisfied his hunger, he amused his host with songs and anecdotes, and the monk—who was clad in brown robe and sandals—in return sang some curious songs, for the cloister had its song-book

as well as its chronicle and hymns. They were of a lively character, and not such as one might have expected to hear in a religious house. But this only shows that these monks were but men after all, and that they were subject to the same passions, and displayed the same weaknesses, as those who had not taken religious vows, thus proving that the way to become good and pure is to overcome, rather than to avoid, temptation.

After they had quitted the monastery and resumed their journey, Siegfried lapsed into a long silence, his mind being occupied with thoughts suggested by their visit to the convent. This silence was at length broken by the Dwarf, who, observing his master's seriousness, launched into the following ditty :—

Our prince is both silent and sad,
And his face is the length of a fiddle.
Whatever's come over the lad?
With a heigh-ho! I diddle, diddle!

If of love he's thinking, he'll find
This a pleasant though difficult riddle:
Wherefore is Don Cupid so blind?
With a heigh-ho! I diddle, diddle!

But to me the reason's quite plain,
For I never exchang'd e'en a frizzle,—
Though many a lass had been fain.
With a heigh-ho! I diddle, diddle!

Here the Dwarf ceased singing; whereupon the Prince exclaimed: "Nay, Elberich, finish thy ditty, for I am anxious to hear thy solution of a riddle that has puzzled wiser heads than thine."

"Then must the subject be a novel one to you, Sir Knight," replied the Dwarf.

"Thy impertinence is equalled by thy wit, Elberich," said Siegfried, "else would'st thou be in danger of a sound boxing. What say you, Count?"

"Methinks the fool's folly is oft wisdom to the wise; and Elberich possesses not only the gift of song, but—at least so it is rumoured—is skilled in the wonderful science of alchemy."

"This passes belief. I had not thought thee so credulous, Count," said Siegfried.

The Dwarf remained silent.

"At least he does not deny it," rejoined the Count.

"And pray, what are the powers thus attributed to him?" asked Siegfried.

"It is said he can work strange marvels by means of medicated potions," answered the Count.

"By my troth, Elberich, if this be true, thou shalt give us proof of thy talent. Seeing we are in quest of adventure, I pray thee give us proof of thy skill."

"It is even said," continued the Count, "that he can

mix potions which have the power of working the most wonderful transformations in the human body, and of throwing those who drink of them back into the days when fairies were as common as blackberries in June."

"Why then, Elberich, hast thou not experimented on thine own person?" asked the Knight, regarding the deformity of the Dwarf.

"You are severe as well as incredulous, Sir Knight," replied the Dwarf.

"I but reason plainly," said the Prince.

"A plea common to the rude," replied the Dwarf, who felt hurt by the Knight's remark.

"Nay, I intended not to anger thee, Elberich," said Siegfried, who was too kind-hearted wilfully to pain even the humblest. "But as regards thy skill in alchemy, I am willing, nay anxious, to test it. If therefore, thou can'st work the marvels the Count speaks of, I am ready to submit myself to thy enchantments."

"So be it," said the Dwarf, dismounting. He then took from his girdle a phial containing a colourless liquid, and held it up for the inspection of his master.

Now Siegfried, though brave, as a knight should be, experienced a feeling akin to trepidation as he regarded the phial charged with such strange potency. Had his pride permitted, he would certainly have withdrawn his

proposal, but he felt bound not to decline the proof he himself had challenged. It was, however, some relief to him when the Count declared his determination to join in the experiment and to share the risk attending it.

They both dismounted, Elberich having in the meanwhile partially filled a leathern cup with bright pure water from the brook which ran close by. He then dropped a portion of the contents of the phial into the cup.

"But what of thyself?" asked Siegfried of the dwarf.

"If it please you, Sir Knight," replied Elberich, "I too will share the draught."

"Nay, Elberich," returned Siegfried; "methinks it were better for thee to keep guard over us, so that there be at least one who may survive to recount our fate in case evil overtake us."

"Fear not, Sir Knight," said Elberich; "there is no danger, else would I not venture the experiment."

"Must the draught be accompanied by those strange incantations familiar to the magicians of old?" inquired the Count.

"No, indeed," replied the Dwarf; "for they were but idle phrases invented to impose upon the ignorant and credulous. Mere words are impotent—the virtue lies

in the potion itself, else am I powerless, and the mysteries of science mere quackery."

Siegfried and the Count having unburdened themselves of their armour, seated themselves by the roadside, and drank from the cup offered to them by Elberich.

"At least 'tis not unpleasant," said the Knight.

"By no means. I expected to find it bitter as aloes," remarked the Count.

Meanwhile the horses and the Jerusalem pony grazed contentedly in the long grass which grew close by.

In a few moments a strange but pleasant feeling of semi-unconsciousness fell upon the two friends, who gradually lost their sitting posture, and at length lay stretched upon the grass, oblivious to the outward world.

What strange visions busied their minds! What events crowded into the short time during which they lay unconscious upon the ground! These, so far as they affect the Knight, it is now our business to describe.

CHAPTER III.

THE FAIRIES' DANCE.

"Come, follow, follow me,
You, fairy elves that be:
Which circle on the greene,
Come follow Mab your queene.
Hand in hand let's danse around,
For this place is fairye ground."

It was a magnificent moonlight night; not a cloud was to be seen, and even the stars were scarcely visible in the presence of the queen whose glory made night seem but a paler day. Lo! upon a velvety mound numbers of fairies were dancing, clad in beautiful vestments of every shade. Youths and maidens were threading the mystic maze, their forms answering to the wavy modulations of the music by graceful evolutions. A fairy seated on a flower played a harp, and such was his skill that the music was melodious as waves of harmony breaking upon silver strands, or as the sounds breathed by the goddess of music from Æolian lyres. It was not im-

passioned, but dreamy, in its character, and was utterly unlike the commonplace tunes known as dance-music. Equally different from the staid ungracefulness of modern dancers were the rhythmic movements of the fairies. Let us, whilst the dance proceeds, attempt to describe one or two of the more striking figures in the strange group crowding the hillock.

The fairy whom you see cooling herself with a fan formed of a butterfly's wing, is exceedingly graceful, and her attractions are set off to advantage by a charming costume, thin as gossamer, and blue as an Italian sky. It is covered with small specks of silver, which reflect the moonlight and charm the eye, as she rocks to and fro, beating time to the music. She is evidently accustomed to play the part of a coquette, for she alternately pouts her pretty ruby lips, and smiles bewitchingly upon the fairy who looks beseechingly into her eyes whilst he offers her a buttercupful of sparkling dew.

"Nay, look not so disdainfully," said the gallant fairy, "upon one who is thy slave in devotion—thy shadow in constancy."

"Ah! but constant only to constant change," replied the bewitching one, with a sigh of affected despair.

"Then am I like the moon," said the youth, "whose absence is but short, and whose return is certain. In-

deed thou knowest how dark is my life when thy smiles do not beam upon me."

"And yet," said she of the pale-blue eyes, "were I to respond to thy love, then thou, like mortals of the human kind, would'st cease to value the love thou now seem'st to prize? Ye covet what ye lack, and sneer at the blessings that lie in your path."

"What can I say in answer to these cruel reproaches?" sighed the wooer, "except that thy bright smile is like the moonbeams which, unlike the fiery glances of the sun, lend a beauty to objects e'en though imperfect as myself."

"Thou art at least an adept in the flatterer's art," said the fairy, with a smile; "and, in sooth, thy pretty speeches merit some return."

"Ah!" replied he, "when flattery and truth cease to be opposed, then seeming fiction becomes but honest truth."

At this repartee the blue-eyed fairy shook her golden tresses, smiled coquettishly upon her admirer, and, taking from him the buttercup, took a further sip of the dew.

Whilst these two were indulging in this flirtation, their immediate neighbours were engaged in a conversation of a very different kind—one indeed that seemed

to imply that they had passed the happy age when hope smiles upon the future, and beauty has not lost its illusion. Sophietta—for that was the name of the fairy clad in emerald green—possessed but the remnants of a beauty which had once drawn admirers to her train. She, however, did not neglect to make the most of what remained to her of good looks, as was apparent from the tastefulness of her dress, and the care bestowed upon her braided tresses.

"I wonder," said she to her companion of pensive mien, "when these frivolities will cease amongst us, and when the charms of mind will meet with that recognition which seems at present to be extended only to the inanities of frivolity?" Sophietta was fond of long words, as you may observe.

"Ah!" replied her companion, who was dressed in a suit not unlike in cut those worn by courtiers in the reign of our Charles the Second; "it would be idle to expect that wit should meet with recognition at the hands of folly, or that reason should reign supreme where culture is despised."

Ah! my young friends, nothing sours grapes so much as the inability to enjoy them. Both of them knew this, though they might not have liked to confess it.

ADVENT OF THE FAIRY QUEEN.

After a short silence, he added: "It is only a few who combine the attractions of youth with the wisdom of riper years, in whom the charms of physical beauty are united with the more sterling qualities of mind."

Sophietta smiled gratefully upon her companion, who repaid her by a look of profound admiration. At this moment a buzz of excitement ran through the troop of fairies. It was evident that something unusual occasioned this commotion. The wooing of the young, and the repinings of the more elderly, alike ceased, and no wonder; for see! Pimpelina, the Queen of the Fairies, is advancing, clad in a magnificent robe of saffron web, her head crowned with a diadem of dewdrops, sparkling in the moonbeams. Her hair fell in golden folds below her waist, and her tiny feet were encased in the prettiest silken sandals. Her face was beautiful as a ray of sunlight upon the sea—her smile as enchanting as hope. Her dimpled arms, white as a lily; her rounded form, nay, her entire figure, was perfect in its loveliness, whilst her manners were equally charming. Vain would be the attempt to paint her as she advanced, with the moonbeams playing among her golden tresses, and her face radiant with smiles. And who rides at her right hand, clad in glittering armour, and bearing

upon his shield the device—Strong and True? And who is he to her left, also clad in armour? and who is that strange, uncouth-looking Dwarf who follows in the rear mounted on a white Jerusalem pony? Need we describe them further in order to enable you to recognise Siegfried, von Eckel, and Elberich? The Knight rode his favourite steed, which, even in its diminished proportions, preserved the beauty of its former self. He was most devoted to the Queen, who was mounted upon a beautiful white squirrel, which capered about and frisked its tail as if conscious of the preciousness of its charge. Though playful with excitement, the silken reins were sufficient to keep it under control. After Siegfried and the Count followed a numerous suite, headed by a grave-looking fairy, who held the office of Lord Treasurer, a position he had had the ability to retain for many years by wearing a look of profound wisdom, and preserving a discreet silence that imposed upon the less wily. This was Herr Rumpelheim.

The appearance of Siegfried and his friend made the hearts of the young fairies flutter with excitement, whilst the knightly bearing and courtesy of the Prince secured for him the golden opinions of all. Meanwhile the fairies sang the following anthem:—

Long live our fairy queen, bright and refulgent;
Gracious and loving, and queenly indulgent.
Lov'd by her subjects all,
May her no ill befall:—
Queen of the Fairies!

Gracious to high and low, beauteous and queenly,
Shining upon her throne, bright and serenely.
May she long live to be,
From every evil free:—
Queen of the Fairies!

When the bright moonbeams play on mountain and fell.
When not a breath of air disturbs the hare-bell;
Let her come forth to hear,
Her subjects' joyous cheer:—
Queen of the Fairies!

Sweet were the voices that hymned this welcome to Pimpelina, and brightly shone the full moon in the heavens, revealing a scene of wondrous extent and beauty. Far away the Seven Mountains reared aloft their silvery heads, and here and there, on distant heights, might be descried castled crags which frowned upon the Rhine. Forests of noble trees bathed their crests in the sheeny moonbeams, whilst brooklets shimmered, and murmured music as they danced along their course. But Siegfried was too much occupied with the Fairy Queen to give thought to the beautiful scene around him.

The Queen, with Siegfried for partner, joined in the dance, and delighted her subjects by the gracefulness of her movements and the condescension of her manners. She had a kindly look for this, and a smile for that one; and such was the lightness of her airy head, that the flowers scarce bent beneath her footsteps, as they offered the sweet incense of their perfumes to her beauty. The Knight fell each moment deeper and deeper in love; for never in his wildest dreams had he pictured a form so perfect, manners so charming, a bearing so queenly. Such was his absorption in the movements of Pimpelina, that he seemed unconscious of aught save her presence. His gaze was, indeed, at times so ardent, and so expressive of passionate admiration, as to cause her to droop her eyelids when she met his gaze. Did she then guess the conquest she had already made?

When the dance was over, the Queen, Siegfried, von Eckel, and their attendants, betook themselves to a mushroom tent, where they partook of refreshments. Grapes, strawberries, and nectarines, apricots and plums, were served in abundance; whilst sparkling elderberry, cool as a mountain rill, appeased their thirst. After they had partaken of these refreshments, dancing was resumed, Pimpelina this time giving her hand to the Count, who delighted her by singing the praises of his

friend, whose gallantry, generosity, and goodness he never wearied of extolling.

When the dance was at an end the Queen commanded that Eretta should dance a *pas de seul.* This she did to the intense delight of all the other fairies, except those who were envious of her sprightliness. She was dressed in a tightly fitting boddice made of grasshoppers' wings. The only ornaments she wore were forget-me-nots intertwined amongst her beautiful flaxen tresses. Ah! so graceful were her movements, so lithe her limbs, that no modern could have rivalled this fairy phantom—for such she seemed—as she flitted about like rays of light thrown from a moving reflector. When her performance ceased she was rewarded with warm applause, which she acknowledged by a graceful curtsey. The Dwarf must have regarded these manifestations of delight as a direct challenge to himself, for he stepped into the circle, and after making a deep bow with mock solemnity, commenced dancing in the most absurd manner, his long unsightly feet contrasting strangely with his thin, mishapen legs. The fairies laughed heartily at his antics, and as the merriment increased with each fresh exhibition of his drollery, Elberich spurred himself to renewed effort, and finally brought his performance to an end by a somersault

which landed him on his back, instead of his legs. This, of course, caused intense amusement in the beholders, who clapped their hands with delight when Elberich rose slowly from the ground and assumed a droll expression of affected pain.

"Your Dwarf, Sir Knight, is a merry fool indeed," said Pimpelina.

"In which respect the professional has the advantage over the natural," said Siegfried, laughing.

Seeing Elberich advancing, the Knight exclaimed: "How now, Elberich? I feared thy mishap had robbed us of a merry fool."

"Nay, Sir Knight," returned the Dwarf, "you were in no danger."

The Queen and her attendants laughed heartily at this witty sally, which seemed to amuse Siegfried as much as the rest of them, for you must know that it was one of the privileges of Elberich's office to raise a laugh even at the expense of the most exalted in rank.

One of Pimpelina's ladies-in-waiting ventured to remark to Siegfried that a course of dumb-bell exercise might improve Elberich's figure, whereupon the dwarf, who overheard the remark, at once replied, "Ne'er fear, my lady, that when I meet with a dumb *belle* I'll try the experiment," thus turning the laugh against her.

Thus the night passed, and on the near approach of dawn the motley company, led by Pimpelina and her retinue, hurried to their home in the mountain side, singing as they went the following song :—

Away, away ! the dawn is breaking
  On the eastern hills afar.
Let us hasten to our dwelling
  Ere daylight pales the morning star.

How sweet the breath of dew-bath'd flowers,
  Bending 'neath our airy tread !
How sweet the song of Philomel
  Ere moonbeams, chas'd by day, have fled !

See ! how the flowers which court the sunlight,
  'Gin to ope their drowsy eyes ;
Let us then be tripping homewards :
  Haste ! 'ere the moonlight vanishes.

Before th' advancing hours awaken
  Morn from off her dewy bed,
Let us to our couches hasten,
  With gleesome song and joyous tread.

Ere the song had ceased they had all vanished, and its last words were borne almost inaudibly upon the breeze.

CHAPTER IV.

FAIRY-LAND.

"It was a palace such as mortal hand
Has never built, nor ecstasy or dream
Reared in the cities of enchanted land."

"The grasshopper, gnat, and fly,
Serve for our minstrelsie."

Ah! who shall describe the Fairy Queen's palace, with its marble columns, golden dome, and sparkling minarets? Who can paint the glories of its porticoes studded with gems of richest hue; its chambers of alabaster floors and marquetries; its treasures of art; its gleaming splendours which dyed the light with colours of the pearl! Not more gorgeous was the Olympian palace of Neptune, which Glaucus and Endymion visited, and which filled them with wonder and delight, nor more magnificent the abode of the Great Mokanna, with its porphyry pillars and rich moresque-ork and roof of gold; nor more dazzling the resplen-

dent roofs of Atrides' palace, though inlaid with the spoils of elephants, and studded with amber.

Pimpelina, surrounded by Siegfried and a brilliant Court, was awaiting the commencement of a concert given in honour of the Knight and his friend. Clad in the most beautiful vestments, she looked even more queenly and bewitching than when she danced upon the soft sward—"the cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

Of course there was the usual interlude during which the musicians tuned their instruments with great satisfaction to themselves, but to the discomfort of the audience. This babel of discordant sounds had, however, ceased previous to the entrance of Pimpelina, who, immediately she became seated, commanded the concert to begin. The conductor, Signor Tamborini—who, by-the-bye, had not a single drop of Italian blood in his veins—tapped with his bâton, and the music commenced. Perfect silence was observed by the audience whilst the performance proceeded, in which respect they presented a pleasing contrast to modern auditors, many of whom seem to regard rude interruptions as a sign of good breeding. The first piece was a symphony by Herr Wagenhäuser, the celebrated maestro, whose genius was so much in advance of his age that his compositions were declared to be the music of the future. This

of course, made it incumbent upon those who made claim to musical taste to applaud them as masterpieces, and to look down superciliously upon those who ventured to bestow upon them less exalted praise. Certainly the symphony was very beautiful, for although there was no air in it to catch the popular taste, it was soothing and melodious, and undoubtedly displayed a profound knowledge of orchestral art. Suddenly, however, a wild clash of cymbals startled not a few of the audience, whilst its effect upon the more classical was to raise them to an unbounded pitch of enthusiasm. It was, indeed, with difficulty that these latter restrained their excitement until the conclusion of the piece. No sooner, however, had the music ceased, and they were free to give expression to their delight, than they gave vent to the most tumultuous applause. Queen Pimpelina's august rank prevented her, of course, from joining in these noisy manifestations of delight; but she did not fail to reward the performers with many gracious bows, and her sweetest smile, whilst at the same time she signified her approval of the enthusiasm of her subjects by graciously tapping with her fan. Siegfried had felt a little hesitancy as to whether he ought to applaud or ridicule the music, but this sign of Pimpelina's approbation quickly decided him, and he

joined in the general applause with marked though less demonstrative signs of satisfaction. And need we say that Signor Tamborini bowed his acknowledgments with becoming diffidence and grace? Silence being at length restored, was immediately succeeded by the hum of conversation.

"I must congratulate your Majesty," said Siegfried, "upon the possession of so admirable an orchestra. Their performance was simply perfect, whilst the music is to me quite a revelation."

"Ah!" said Pimpelina, "you forget that the piece is by the great Herr Wagenhäuser, as to whose merits, however, opinion seems to be divided. I must confess that in my judgment his music is most charming. It certainly abounds with transitions startling to the uninitiated. Indeed I thought, Sir Knight, that you started when these occurred?"

"True, your Majesty," replied Siegfried, "I was somewhat startled by the crash of the cymbals."

"And yet," rejoined Pimpelina, "to me the sudden intrusion of these shrill tones is by no means discordant. Indeed, they seem to rouse one from the lethargic mood induced by the monotonous harmony of the general music, and to revive in us the energy necessary to enjoyment. Wagenhäuser's music

is therefore delightful, as combining repose with action."

"Your Majesty has, I venture to observe, studied not only German music but German philosophy," said Siegfried, who could scarcely follow Pimpelina in her criticism."

"Music of the future it may become," grunted the Lord Treasurer, "for it certainly bears no resemblance to the music of the past. But new crotchets must clothe themselves in strange effects. Originality in these days seems to be synonymous with oddity. Not, however, that I ever lay claim to musical taste," he added, apologetically.

"Ah!" said the fairy who sat next to him, and who looked archly over her fan, "your abuse of Herr Wagenhäuser's music is the greatest compliment you could pay it."

The Lord Treasurer's cheeks began to expand with importance, for he was not quite sure whether there lurked a compliment or a sarcasm in these words. He ventured, however, to inquire how this could be.

"Because," she replied, "a distaste for music is proverbial of genius."

The Lord Treasurer failed to remember that this remark by no means implied that all those who lacked

musical taste were men of genius. On the contrary, he accepted the remark as a compliment to himself, and rewarded his neighbour with a complacent smile, as he remarked: "Ah! even such as I are no more proof against flattery than the youngest of our subjects." From this you will gather that the Lord Treasurer had fallen into the habit of arrogating to himself a supremacy which was the prerogative of his royal mistress alone. But then, is not this a trait common among ourselves to-day? Does not even the youngest clerk speak of "our house," "our firm," with a paternal and patronising air?

Whilst this conversation was going on, a moustached musician of most elegant figure had ascended the platform, and held a scroll of music with a nonchalant air, whilst he gave his moustache an occasional and languid curl with his fingers, as he cast a glance at the audience. He was to sing to the accompaniment of a harp, which was played with skill and taste by a lank-haired fairy. The singer certainly possessed a voice of great sweetness and compass.

The conductor tapped with his bâton, whereupon the harpist played the introduction to the song with consummate grace and taste. The melody then merged into an accompaniment, to which the moustached fairy carolled forth this song:—

"The harvest moon was shining,
Not a cloud bedimm'd the sky,
Not a sound disturb'd the stillness,
Save the owl's discordant cry.

"'Adieu! my own sweet maiden,
For at morn I must away,
To join the host which marshals
At the early dawn of day.'

"In whisperings soft and low
The lovers bade fond adieu,
Nor heard the screech-owl's cry
Of 'Holoo! tu-wit! tu-whoo!'

"The maid pines in her bower,
Sighing for her absent knight,
Nor heeds the birds' sweet carol,
Or the glories of the night.

"And thus she grew aweary
Of her life, for love of him,
Who fell whilst fighting bravely
Against heathen Paladin.

"So ran the tale—but hardly
Had Spring breath'd on Nature's face,
Ere knight and maid each other
Clasp'd in passionate embrace."

The song was well rendered, and was received with applause; but instead of the singer of it reappearing in response to the repeated cries of "Encore! Encore!" there

stepped upon the platform the most absurd-looking object you can imagine. The instant he appeared the

audience burst into laughter and applause. Nor was this to be wondered at, considering the figure thus unexpectedly presented to them. Everything that paint

and dress could do to render it even more grotesque than nature had fashioned it, had been done. The small turned-up nose was red as a cherry; the high cheek bones were also redolent of paint; whilst a moustache of the most absurd length, curled into a ring, and culminated in a point upright as the pinnacle of a minaret. The garb was fantastic to a degree; yellow and blue and red intermingled in the most ludicrous manner, and gave the little figure an appearance not unlike that of the fool in a modern pantomime. But the laughter, though loud and continuous, failed to produce the slightest effect upon the individual who was the subject of it, and who relaxed not a muscle of his features, but preserved the drollest appearance of stolidity. At length silence was restored, whereupon the Dwarf—for it was none other than Elberich—struck a chord upon the instrument slung round his shoulder, and which closely resembled a guitar. He then—in a voice evidently intended to imitate that of the previous singer—launched into the following ditty:—

"Ah! say not thou must leave me.
I could not bear to part,
For art not thou mine own love,
Mine own, mine own sweetheart!

"I could not live without thee,
My heart would pine away;
Then harken, chickabiddie,
And do not say me nay!

"Speak not to me of glory—
I hate to hear that word,
'Tis like the jewel said to lie
In th' forehead of a toad.

"Then leave this bauble toy,
To those who love to fight;
And thou and I together,
Their epitaph will write:

"'Peace! Here lie bold knights and true,
Who on adventure bent,
Set out for distant lands,
Their foes to circumvent.
"But alas! alack! a day!
That one should have to write
O'er them this epitaph;
'They died—and sarv'd 'em right!'"

Now, whether it was the words, or the tune, or the gestures accompanying them, we cannot tell, but the effect was—as Dominie Sampson would have said—prodigious! And the hilarity of the audience became still further heightened by the grotesqueness of the bow he made in response to the acclamations that greeted

his performance. He paid no heed, however, to the repeated cries of "Encore! Encore!" but strutted from the platform with mock-heroic gait.

The Dwarf shortly reappeared at the head of a troupe of musicians whose appearance was even stranger than his own. As each one ascended the platform it bowed to the audience, quietly took its appointed place, and then surveyed the room and its occupants with critical coolness. The troupe excited the greatest surprise, as you may imagine, when we tell you that it was composed of Grasshoppers, whose filmy wings and variegated colours shone resplendently in the light.

Elberich assumed the conductor's bâton; and really you would have laughed heartily had you seen the Grasshoppers handle their instruments, which they tuned as naturally and as noisily as did their betters. The drummer, by-the-by, had a row of reed pipes fastened under its chin, and looked for all the world like the man who provides the music at a Punch and Judy show. Of course, in the process of tuning, notes that were too flat immediately became too sharp, and those that were too sharp lost no time in becoming too flat. But after a while the discord gave place to harmony, whereupon the Dwarf tapped his bâton, in imitation of Herr Wagenhäuser.

Pimpelina, Siegfried, and indeed every one present, were intensely amused at the appearance of this novel troupe. In truth, this part of the entertainment was entirely unexpected; and how the Dwarf had contrived it none seemed to know. But that it was amusing, all were agreed.

And how they played! Herr Wagenhäuser was charmed with their performance, and evinced his delight by shouting "Bravo! Bravo!" at the height of his voice. The music was, at times, sad as the breathings of an evening breeze; at others, filled with wild or touching

cadences. On the conclusion of the piece, Pimpelina sent to inquire of the Dwarf its title, when she was informed that it was "A Nocturne" of his own composing. Nor did the Queen fail to convey to Elberich her satisfaction with the performance, or to give orders that the Grasshoppers should be regaled with suitable refreshment.

And so the time flew, Herr Wagenhäuser and Elberich alternately engaging the attention of the audience, the final verdict being in favour of the Grasshoppers, which were pronounced the dearest and most charming musicians in the world!

CHAPTER V.

JEALOUSY.

> "Yet there is one more cursed than they all,
> That canker-worm, that monster, Jealousie."

THE fairies' garden was one it would be impossible for us adequately to describe. It was lovely as the most gorgeous transformation scene ever witnessed at Drury Lane or Covent Garden, and, indeed, the recollection of one of those marvellous displays of scenic art will give you a far better idea of the scene now before us than the most elaborate description that we could pen.

The garden was luxuriant in exotics and choicest flowers, whilst tiny birds, of the most resplendent plumage, rocked themselves on branches from which hung fruits of tempting lusciousness. Perfumes of sweetest odour breathed fragrance delicious as "the cedared alleys of the Hesperides." Plants and foliage of every hue waved in soothing undulations, whilst the

waters fell in sparkling sprays from a distant fountain, catching and reflecting the rainbow hues of the fishes which besported themselves in the crystal stream beneath. Fairies, clad in garments cloud-like in their filmy textures, reclined upon the flowery mead,

> "Thick as idle motes in sunny ray."

What the light, or whence it proceeded, we cannot tell, but it was soft yet refulgent,—less brilliant than that of the sun, more luminous than that of the moon. The whole scene was one which recalls to the mind the voluptuous and witching beauty of the landscape where Indolence

> "Close-hid his castle mid embowering trees,
> That half shut out the beams of Phœbus bright,
> And made a kind of chequer'd day and night;"

or the delightful garden of Adonis, which Spencer has described in *The Fäerie Queen.* And as in that paradise, so in this, there was a pleasant arbour formed by encircling branches, amongst which eglantine and woodbine twined themselves.

Seated in this arbour was Herr Rumpelheim, the Lord Treasurer, and another fairy,—the latter richly attired, and wearing a sword of the most costly kind. The hilt was richly jewelled, as was the tiny scabbard in which it rested.

It was evident from the air of ill-humour which sat upon the younger fairy's brow, that the news which his companion was communicating to him was anything but of a pleasant nature. He evinced his dissatisfaction by twirling his moustache in an irritable manner, and by occasionally giving vent to sundry angry ejaculations, and by striking the hilt of his sword with passionate vehemence.

"I repeat," said Herr Rumpelheim, "that this stranger Knight has produced a profound impression upon the Queen, and that unless something happens to stay the progress of his suit, he will shortly share her throne."

"Am I then to understand," asked his companion, the Fairy Prince Frizzoli, "that this fellow has ventured to pay open court to Pimpelina?"

"Pardon me, your Highness," answered Rumpelheim, "if my revelations are unwelcome; but my duty to yourself, and indeed to your august cousin, compel me to speak plainly. Although I have been unable to discover that the Knight has explicitly declared his affection for the Queen, it is yet certain that he has lost no opportunity of revealing it by stealthy and subtle means. Nay, none can have failed to observe the looks of rapture with which he has presumed

to regard her Majesty, nor the sighs, but ill-concealed, which have escaped him."

"S'death!" exclaimed the Prince, "and how have these impertinences been received by the Queen?"

"In such a manner as leaves no reason to doubt their acceptability," answered Herr Rumpelheim.

"'Tis impossible," muttered the Prince, as he paced the arbour. Then, after a short pause, he asked, "How counsel you, then, Herr?"

"That there is but one way of ridding yourself of this rival. Your Highness' prowess in arms, your bravery, tact, and skill, have oft been displayed in the lists. The Queen, as you know, is partial to these knightly jousts, and would readily afford an opportunity for the exhibition of her subjects' skill. This being secured, what more natural than that you should enter the lists, and by challenging the stranger Knight, and overcoming him, ridding the Court of his presence? Such, indeed, is her Majesty's pride, that she would never deign to bestow her hand upon one who had failed to prove victorious in the contest."

"'Tis well thought of," said the Prince, meditatively. "But how can this be brought about?"

"Nothing is easier," replied Rumpelheim; "for it will shortly be Her Majesty's birthday, and festivities

will be held in celebration of it. Now, the nature of these rests with me, and I will take care that the most attractive feature of the celebration shall be that which you desire."

The Prince was delighted with the prospect thus held out, and shook the Minister's hand cordially. He had hardly let it go when he angrily exclaimed, " Donner und Blitzen " (Thunder and lightning !)

This exclamation was occasioned by his seeing Pimpelina and Siegfried walking side by side in the garden, followed by a lady-in-waiting.

Siegfried was, of course, oblivious to the hostile criticism which his attentions to the Queen had aroused. Nor was Pimpelina aware of the angry feelings with which his attentions had been regarded by her relative, upon whom she had ever looked with cousinly favour, without defining even in her own mind the motives which dictated his flatteries.

Strange to say, the conversation between the Queen and Siegfried at the moment when they were overheard by the Prince, had reference to the latter, whose presence had disturbed the feelings of satisfaction which had been paramount in our hero's heart. The Prince had, indeed, been absent from Court at the time of Siegfried's advent, and had only returned on the even-

ing following the concert already described. The Knight had, however, not failed to observe the friendly character of the intercourse between the cousins, and, lover-like, was jealous lest the familiarity natural to their kinship should result in a still closer relationship. He now exhibited considerable adroitness in the manner in which he contrived to gain from Pimpelina the information he desired respecting the Prince, and was greatly relieved when he discovered—or flattered himself that he discovered—that her heart was free, so far as her cousin was concerned. Of him she spoke unreservedly, and without any of the diffidence which usually accompanies a more serious passion.

The Queen invited Siegfried to a seat, and seeing the Court harper in the vicinity, inquired of the Knight if he was familiar with the harp. Siegfried replied in the affirmative, whereupon Pimpelina requested him to favour her with a song. The Knight was in nowise sorry of the opportunity thus afforded him, not only of exhibiting his skill, but also of giving expression, through the medium of song, to the feelings which agitated his heart. Having, therefore, received the harp, he broke forth into the following song, which he sung with tenderest expression :—

Love dwelt in a Cottage and made it fair;
  So fair, 'twas joyous to see
The faces lit up with happiness there—
  Where dwelt no enmity.

Love passed to the Hall, and bless'd with delight
  The dwellers that lived therein;
For joy fill'd their hearts, and attun'd the pipe
  To th' lays which they did sing.

Love flew to the Palace and stay'd awhile,
  Till all obey'd its behest;
Then with flattering words each did beguile
  The one he lov'd the best.

Love disappeared, and the world seem'd dark,
  And the heart beat sad and slow;
And the raven flapp'd where erewhile the lark
  Had sped to heights aglow.

Ah! Love is a guest to be welcom'd aye,
  In homes of every degree;
For it lights them up with its cheering ray,
  And fills each heart with glee.

When the Knight had ceased singing, a sigh escaped Pimpelina, much to the satisfaction of Elberich, who, however, was restrained by the harper's proximity from pressing his suit.

This pretty scene had not escaped the notice of Prince Frizzoli and the Lord Treasurer, both of whom had drunk in every word of the song.

"Your Highness," said the Minister, "needs no further evidence of the state of affairs *there*"—pointing to the Queen and Siegfried.

"No, indeed," replied the Fairy Prince; "matters seem to be even worse than I feared. However, let no time be lost in bringing about the event which shall humble this upstart's pride, and rid us of his dangerous presence."

"Your Highness' wishes are commands," said the wily Minister, "and the result of the joust cannot be doubtful."

The Prince then parted from Rumpelheim, and walked leisurely to where the Queen and Siegfried were seated, for he deemed it unwise to leave them, lest an opportunity might be afforded the latter of still further ingratiating himself in Pimpelina's favour.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TOURNAMENT.

> "When from the hilly dens, at midnight hour,
> Forth rush the airy elves in mimic state,
> And o'er the moonlight heath with swiftness scour,
> In glittering arms the little horsemen shine."

THE event which had been anticipated with so much interest by the fairy community, and with eagerness by the Fairy Prince and Siegfried, was at hand, and the tourney which the Lord Treasurer had suggested in the interests of his prince was regarded auspiciously by that wily and self-conceited gentleman. The place selected for the spectacle was the grassy common where we first made acquaintance with the fairies. And certainly no more suitable spot, nor a more beautiful night, could have been chosen, for the sward was soft as velvet, and the moon shone resplendently in an unclouded sky.

Of course, the coming joust had formed the subject

of many discussions, and although it was not known who were to take part in it, rumour had fixed pretty accurately upon those who were to do so. Indeed the Lord Treasurer had dropped casual hints to the effect that the Fairy Prince, as the nearest relative and prospective consort of Pimpelina, would enter the lists against all comers, and contest for the chaplet which was to grace the brow of the victor. And as Siegfried had remained silent as to his intentions, it was generally anticipated that the Prince would, by virtue of his rank and gallantry, be allowed to secure the prize without contest. Such, however, was not the anticipation of the Prince or the Minister, nor of the Count or Elberich. These judged that Siegfried had become too much enamoured of the Fairy Queen to resign the prize which her fair hand was to bestow, without disputing for it. And there was still another who would have been both surprised and mortified had our hero permitted his rival to secure it without first proving his title to it by the display of superior skill in the lists.

The first encounter was to be a single tourney, which was to be followed by a general one, limited, however, to six knights.

A circle had been formed by planting flowers, which, being in full bloom, and of divers colours presented a

very attractive appearance. The circle was broken at one part, that being the place where the combatants were to enter the lists. A gorgeous canopy of flowers showed the position which Pimpelina was to occupy, whilst the remaining part of the spectators were to take their seats upon less brilliant, though scarcely less beautiful ones.

At length the fairies trooped to the place, preceded by the band of Grasshoppers, who had received the special commands of the Queen to honour the occasion with their presence. For them seats had been provided upon mushrooms. In the centre of the pageant came Pimpelina, clad in gossamer robe, her hair sparkling with dewdrops. Ah! how charming she looked, and what captivating smiles did she bestow upon her subjects! She was driven in a chariot formed of a shell, drawn by four beautiful white squirrels, with postilions. Immediately in the rear of the Queen came the Lord Treasurer and the marshals, whilst on her right hand rode the Fairy Prince, and at her left Siegfried and the Count. The former rode a magnificent black charger, while Siegfried rode his beautiful white steed. None, however, wore their armour, for it had been arranged that those who desired to enter the lists should accoutre themselves in a pavilion erected for the purpose.

When the Queen had taken her appointed seat, the trumpet sounded, the laws of the tourney were proclaimed, and the order of the contests declared. Then, in order to give the combatants time to don their armour, the Grasshoppers began to play, but the spectators were too excited to pay much attention to the music. A buzz of expectation was heard, heads were seen in close proximity to each other, and every countenance bespoke the curiosity each felt. At length the music ceased, the trumpet again sounded, and the last note had scarcely died away ere the Fairy Prince rushed into the ring and threw down his gauntlet as a challenge to any who might wish to gainsay his claim to the chaplet of flowers. He was clad in bright armour which glittered in the moonlight. His head was covered with a helmet, his face being enclosed in a casque. Upon his shield he bore the device—*I fail not.*

He was welcomed with applause, which became hushed when Siegfried rode into the lists and accepted the challenge by casting his gauntlet upon the ground. Then the applause burst forth again even more loudly than before. Siegfried advanced before the Queen, and, springing from his horse, bent his knee before her, and then remounted. This gallantry met with due recog-

THE TOURNAMENT.

nition, for Pimpelina bowed gracefully to the Knight, amid the plaudits of the fairies.

As the fairies regarded the tourney as a pleasant trial of skill, it was customary for the Knights to bear lances without heads, and with round braces of wood at the extremity; for they would have recoiled from witnessing a contest in which the lives of the combatants were endangered.

The Fairy Prince and Siegfried took up their respective positions at the extremities of the ring, and there awaited the signal for the onslaught. The trumpet sounded, the signal was given, and then the two Knights sped towards each other with the speed of arrows shot from a newly-strung bow. A breathless silence reigned over the multitude. Such was the shock of the encounter, that the Fairy Prince's weapon was shivered to pieces as it struck his antagonist's shield. This accident had well-nigh proved disastrous to the Prince, who, however, by a great effort succeeded in recovering his seat. Siegfried's lance had struck his opponent's shield, but failed to unhorse him.

A fresh lance having been handed to the Prince by his squire, the combatants again awaited the signal; and as soon as it had been given they spurred their steeds, and dashed with incredible speed towards each other,

and this time with more effect, for Siegfried, by a dexterous use of his lance, hurled the Prince from his horse with such precision and force that both horse and rider rolled over upon the sward, whilst the Knight stood motionless as though he had taken no part in the fray. His success was greeted with tumultuous applause, and the waving of handkerchiefs by the female fairies.

The Fairy Prince was assisted from the ring by his squire, and though stunned by the violence of his fall, was but little hurt.

The trumpet again sounded, and the marshal approached Siegfried and led him to the place where Pimpelina sat, his charger being meanwhile left in the care of the Count. When Siegfried approached the Queen, he removed his helmet, and knelt before her. Pimpelina then arose, and placing the chaplet upon his brow, said, "Receive, Sir Knight, this trophy of thy victory, and with it the congratulations of one who rejoices in having so chivalrous a Knight for her champion." She then proffered him her hand, which he kissed with knightly courtesy, and with a quickly-beating heart.

The next was to be a general tourney, and when the marshals had caused the trumpets to sound the call to

the lists, several knights responded to it. But as it was necessary that they should enrol themselves on opposite sides, the question was who were to be the champions of the rival parties. This was soon settled, it being arranged that the knights should enrol themselves under the banners of the Fairy Prince and of Siegfried. The consequence was, that several of the Fairy knights immediately announced their election to fight under the leadership of their Prince, whose fall they had witnessed with chagrin, for they regarded the presence, and still more the success, of the stranger with jealousy and dislike, a feeling which was perhaps natural, considering the favour accorded to him by their sovereign. Nevertheless, there were not wanting those who, actuated either by generosity towards Siegfried, or a less laudable feeling towards others who had sided with the Fairy Prince, decided to share the fortune of our hero. The Count, of course, placed himself beside his friend, ready to exert his utmost skill and prowess in the encounter. When the arrangements had been completed, it was found that six knights had enrolled themselves on either side. And certainly, after the marshals had withdrawn, and the trumpet had sounded, the appearance presented by the rival parties—who were ranged in single file—was extremely striking.

Of the bearing of the two chiefs we need say no more than that the Fairy Prince seemed to have sustained no hurt from his fall. The others, by their martial appearance and gorgeous trappings, formed an attractive sight, as they held aloft their lances from which floated the pennons bearing their crests, whilst their shields bore their devices in various colours.

Siegfried took up his position opposite to the Fairy Prince, who hoped in this encounter to achieve a victory over his rival which would, in some measure, compensate for his former reverse.

The signal was at length given, and Siegfried—who guessed what was passing through the mind of his antagonist—plunged his spurs into the flanks of his steed, which flew with lightning speed towards the opposite rank. Almost equally vehement was the onslaught of the Count, nor, indeed, did any of the combatants lack the ardour and skill displayed by their leaders. The greatest excitement was visible in the many faces which were stretched forward to witness the result of the conflict. Their suspense was, however, of short duration, for in a moment the Knights met, and with such impetus that the sound of their meeting filled many of the beholders with terror. Siegfried bore down upon his opponent with tremendous force, and

such was the skill with which he directed his lance that it struck the Fairy Prince full upon his breast, and hurled him once more to the ground, amid the plaudits of the spectators. The Count was equally successful in unhorsing the Knight with whom he was engaged, and thus two of the six opposing horsemen were overthrown, whilst one of Siegfried's knights was, by the dexterity of his antagonist, dismounted.

The trumpets again sounded, and the combatants retired to their respective starting-points, whilst the squires who had attended the vanquished knights assisted them from the lists. The succeeding encounters, though viewed with interest by many of the onlookers, had lost their attraction to those who had hoped to witness the triumph of their Prince. To Pimpelina, however, the renewal of the contest was regarded with an interest scarcely less than that with which she had watched the joust, for was not Siegfried still one of the combatants, and though he had hitherto displayed a skill and prowess that had enhanced his accomplishments in her eyes, might he not even yet be worsted on the renewal of the conflict? Such, however, was the strength and dexterity of Siegfried and the Count, that none could stand against them, and their present antagonists were not more successful than the former ones, the

victory being declared to rest with the strangers. Such, indeed, was their success that it seemed difficult to decide to which of them ought to be assigned the honours of the tourney. Siegfried, however, with his usual kindness and generosity, expressed to the marshals his desire that these should be awarded to the Count, and Pimpelina, on this being made known to her, at once complied with a request so honourable to her champion. She nevertheless commanded that both should attend her, and on their kneeling uncovered before her, she placed a chaplet upon the brow of the Count, whom she thus addressed—"Receive, Sir Knight, this token of the skill and gallantry which have made you victor in the tourney." Then, addressing Siegfried, she said, "And to you, Sir Knight, I can offer no prize worthy of the chivalrous gallantry you have displayed not only in the contest, but in the interests of your friend and fellow Knight."

Loud acclamations rent the air at the conclusion of this ceremony. The trumpets proclaimed the spectacle at an end, and to the sound of music the multitude returned to Fairy Land, where they were regaled with a banquet worthy of so memorable a festivity.

CHAPTER VII.

TREASON

"Long thus he chew'd the cud of inward grief,
And did consume his gall with anguish sore."

NOW you will readily imagine that although the Fairy Prince Frizzoli soon recovered from the effects of his fall, his defeat had left his mind a prey to bitter reflections. He had not only absented himself—on the plea of fatigue—from the banquet which followed the tournament, but had continued in privacy ever since. During this time his thoughts had been fixed upon the means whereby he might get rid of his rival, or rather how he could secure to himself the prize which he so eagerly coveted—the hand of Pimpelina. That her heart, if not already given to the Knight, was becoming estranged from himself, he felt assured, and this it was that filled his heart with bitterness. The remembrance of the scene in the garden, and of the plaintive tones in

which Siegfried had sung of love; the recollection of the drooping eyelids betokening a more than common interest and feeling on the part of the Queen; and of the prowess that his rival had exhibited in the lists; chafed the proud spirit of the Prince, and made him vow vengeance against the Knight. But the violence of his anger incapacitated him from deciding upon any course of action. No sooner had one commended itself to his mind than it was succeeded by another, his judgment being swayed by the turbulence of his passions. Whilst he was in this state of indecision, who should come in but Rumpelheim, the Lord Treasurer, who discovered, from his reception, the Prince's state of mind.

"Faith!" exclaimed the Prince, "your scheme of joust and tourney has had but a sorry ending."

"It is of that I come to speak with your Highness," said Rumpelheim.

"The subject is hardly a promising one," said the Prince.

"And yet there are many who speak in terms of warm praise of your Highness' bearing in the lists," said the wily Lord Treasurer.

"The praise lacks that which would make it welcome—success," returned the Prince. "'Tis but a sorry spirit that can heal its wounds with idle words."

"Why, e'en the Knight——"

"Ah! what of him?"

"He makes no secret of your worth, nor stints his praises of your knightly prowess," said Rumpelheim.

"And thereby adds to his other qualities a title to generosity. Enough of this!"

This speech was followed by a short silence, during which the Prince paced the apartment in great agitation. At length he stopped, and said to Rumpelheim, "What is to be done?—have you nothing to suggest? See you not that the result of this unfortunate tournament must be damaging—nay, ruinous—to my suit?"

"And of happy augury to that of the Knight," added Rumpelheim.

Again the Prince paced the apartment, and then asked: "When saw you last the Queen?"

"E'en but an hour ago."

"Well?"

"She was exchanging courtesies with the Knight," replied Rumpelheim, assuming a tone of indifference.

"Cooing like turtle doves, eh?"

"And oblivious of aught but themselves," said Rumpelheim,

"Well, go on—go on," said the Prince, impatiently.

"They were talking to each other in language which

but feebly interpreted the language of their eyes, though each flower in the nosegay he gave her served as a text upon which he discoursed of love and beauty in words of such sweet eloquence as charmed the listener, and suffused her cheeks with blushes."

"Nay, spare me not," said the Prince, motioning the Lord Treasurer to proceed.

"And when he presented the flowers—which, by-the-by, were tied with a lover's knot—he pressed them to his lips, and with modest diffidence besought their acceptance."

"Truly, the scene must have been a touching one, else had it not taught thy tongue such eloquence," said the Prince, who immediately afterwards exclaimed, "S'death! must this be endured?"

"That rests with your Highness," said Rumpelheim.

The Prince turned suddenly upon the Lord Treasurer, and said: "Speak out, Rumpelheim! Thou knowest that thy words rankle in my heart, and that the Knight's success is gall and wormwood to my soul. Speak out, then, for I love the Queen, and until the advent of this stranger had hoped to call her mine. But now my hopes are well-nigh gone—scattered by this stranger whom I thought to humble in the lists, but

who has bettered his chances by the encounter. To thee I look for counsel, trusting in thy friendship and relying upon thy aid, and promising that when success is mine, thou too shalt share its honours."

"My counsel and help is at your Highness' service," said Rumpelheim.

"How, then, wouldst thou advise?" asked the Prince.

"Our purpose is clear," answered Rumpelheim.

"Aye, but the means? These thou hast already considered?"

"Long and earnestly," answered Rumpelheim; "but the obstacles are clearer to be seen than are the means of removing them."

"If this be the impotent conclusion of thy meditations," said the Prince, "I marvel at thy visit. My temper brooks not delay, nor to be reminded of difficulties it would better beseem thee to remove than to magnify."

"Such was the purpose of my visit, but I feared to appear too sanguine, lest the failure of my efforts might brand me traitor to your service."

"Ah! then I did not misjudge thee," said the Prince, brightening at the prospect of his securing the hand of Pimpelina.

"Two courses are open to us," said Rumpelheim; "the one, to get rid of the Knight; the other, to remove the Queen."

"But of what avail were either in the furtherance of my suit?" asked the Prince. "To rid us of the Knight would but close the Queen's heart the more firmly against me; whilst to seize her person would not only be treasonable, but futile."

"Your Highness speaks truly," said Rumpelheim; "but it is surely possible to sever the Queen from the Knight's presence by means that shall favour, not destroy, your suit."

"Explain thy meaning."

"Well, there is a Black Dwarf of whom your Highness may perhaps have heard, and who dwells in the forest near by. He is reputed to possess great power, and 'tis said, indeed—though I vouch not for its truth,—that he hath o'ercome an army by his unaided arm; whilst it is certain that he hath rid the forest of the wild animals which formerly infested it. It is also said that he killed in single combat the giant Gurthin, who once inhabited these parts."

"I have heard of these things," said the Prince. "But proceed."

"Your Highness is, no doubt, anxious to learn

how the services of so powerful an ally are to be secured?"

"Well?"

"I have long and anxiously meditated upon the means of securing those services, and, methinks, not without success," said Rumpelheim.

"Thou interests me," said the Prince.

"Every creature," continued the Lord Treasurer, "is a combination of strange inconsistencies; every great quality hath its counterpart weakness,—and it is in the discovery of this weakness wherein lies wisdom. The bravest hath points wherein he is the greatest of cowards, —the noblest hath the germs of baseness within him,— the brightest and the best have stains which tarnish the beauty of their lives."

"The prelude, at least, lacks not wisdom," said the Prince, somewhat amused at the oracular utterances of Rumpelheim.

"As the successful warrior must find out the weak points in his enemy's armour, so, in like manner, he who would command the services of others must discover and play upon their weaknesses. Now the Black Dwarf, as your Highness knows, is, like all his race, of malevolent disposition, and will be ready enough to work any mischief we may desire."

"Proceed."

"Why, then, should we not obtain his help, and by this means overcome your rival, and realise your wishes?"

"I mark not thy plan, so explain," said the Prince.

"As your Highness is aware, the Queen will take her usual airing a quarter after the moon rises. In the meantime, I can seek an interview with the Black Dwarf, who will, I fear not, enter readily into our scheme, and by bringing your royal cousin into direst straits, make her submissive as a cooing dove."

"I like it not," said the Prince.

"Well, if it be that your Highness prefers to renounce your suit rather than make the venture, so be it," said Rumpelheim, with a shrug of his shoulder that would have done credit to a French dancing-master.

This action seemed to produce an effect upon the Prince, who at once inquired: "But what certainty shall we have that the Black Dwarf will aid us in thy plan? True, he may be ready enough to secure the person of the Queen, but hardly to release her when she is in his power; and if so, how vain would be our regret at having sacrificed her happiness without even promoting my own!"

"These are but shadowy fears conjured by love,

replied Rumpelheim. "The Black Dwarf is capable, no doubt, of deceiving us, and would be very glad to play us false. But though fond of mischief, he is even more the slave of the passion of his race—avarice; and by gratifying his cupidity, we shall make sure of his not betraying us."

"But how furthers this my suit? Love cannot be wrung from the heart, nor can the Queen's hand be won by fraud."

"Your Highness forgets that you will appear as her brave rescuer, and not as one who is seeking a favour. You will have shown valour and enterprise in her service, and will by these means command her gratitude and prosper in your suit."

"But will she so readily forget and renounce the Knight?" asked the Prince, upon whom Rumpelheim's words produced an evident effect.

"Ah! fear not, your Highness," replied the wily Minister; "the Queen, in the first outburst of her joy at being released from the hated companionship of the Black Dwarf, will pledge you her hand without casting a thought upon the absent Knight."

The Prince walked to and fro in the apartment, too weak to resist the temptation which appeared to promise so much, and yet not entirely unmoved by

nobler feelings which prompted him to a better course.

"Ah!" he muttered, half audibly, "and once mine she may forget this hasty passion for a stranger, and make me the happiest of Princes. And yet I like not the plan, for it places Pimpelina in the power of a wicked, unscrupulous Dwarf; and if he betrayed us!—and yet I cannot consent to loose thee, my queen." Then turning to Rumpelheim, he said, "And thou art sure of success?"

"I cannot doubt of it."

"Well, then, nothing attempted, nothing won; so hasten thee to the Black Dwarf, and report to me as speedily as possible the result of thy interview with him."

Rumpelheim, after shaking the hand which the Prince extended to him, hastily quitted the room, and in passing out, almost ran against Elberich who happened to be strolling about, apparently with no other object than to while an idle hour away. Herr Rumpelheim did not stay to accost him, but passed on, and when he had disappeared the Dwarf began to be suspicious that the Minister's visit to the Fairy Prince portended mischief. After having made all sorts of surmises, and having, of course, failed to satisfy himself by

this means, he, like a practical little fellow, decided to act, and as if a happy thought had occurred to him, he struck his nose with his forefinger, and—his face beaming with satisfaction—exclaimed, "MEIN TARNKAPPE!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMPACT.

"Only from time to time they (the dwarfs) appear in the world, and betoken woe or weal to men, according to their nature; for they are divided into two tribes—the benevolent and the wrathful."

The Pilgrims of the Rhine.

THE Black Dwarf whose aid Herr Rumpelheim had promised to invoke, lived in a small hill in the forest which adjoined Fairy Land. Like all of his race, he was wonderfully skilled in metals—the armour made by him being of matchless strength, though of exceeding lightness. He was as ugly in person as he was malevolent in disposition, and his natural ill-temper had been soured still more by the fact of his having been exiled from his own land and people for having stolen the child of one of his own race. Now the Black Dwarfs, though they regarded the theft of human children as praiseworthy, visited with the direst punishment the abduction of one of themselves, and the Black

Dwarf having been guilty of this crime, had been driven into exile, and had since lived in solitude in a foreign land.

Rumpelheim had never seen the Black Dwarf, though he seemed to know so much about him. Strange rumours had reached his ears of the skill and power of the underground dweller, the clink of whose hammer as it fell in measured strokes upon the anvil had often—so it was said—been heard in the forest. Rumpelheim fully believed all that had been told him respecting the Black Dwarf, as to whose existence there could not, indeed, be any doubt. And now he had pledged himself to seek an interview with him, and he was not going to break his promise, though he felt just a little timid at the prospect of what he had undertaken out of hatred for the Knight, and anxiety to promote his own interests by serving the Prince. As already stated, the minister knew that the Black Dwarf was—like all his race—avaricious as well as malicious, and that by gratifying the former of these qualities he could direct and control the latter. Having, therefore, provided himself with some precious stones and a magnificent ruby ring, he set out the following night for the Black Dwarf's dwelling under the hill in the forest. Having arrived near it, he hid himself behind a tree which grew near

it. He listened very attentively for the sound of the forge, but he listened in vain. At times his imagination well-nigh persuaded him that he heard the clink! clink! clink! rising in musical cadences from the workshop below, but on listening again this illusion was dispelled. He began to think that his visit would prove fruitless, and he was about to turn his steps homewards when he was startled by the owl-like cry of "Haloo! haloo! tu-whit! tu-whoo!"

Rumpelheim quaked, and cast his eyes hastily to the tree whence the sound proceeded, but he failed to discover anything. He strained his ears to catch the cry again, but as he listened in vain he came to the conclusion that he had been duped by his imagination. He had, however, no sooner settled himself in this comfortable belief than the silence was broken by a repetition of the cry. This time there could be no mistake about it, so Rumpelheim cast a rapid glance into the elder-tree whence the cry had proceeded, and there, sure enough, he saw a strange figure crouching among the branches. It was at that moment too dark to enable him to distinguish the outlines of the object clearly, but soon afterwards the moon peered from behind a cloud and threw its light upon the scene. The visage of the Black Dwarf was then revealed, and certainly an uglier

one it would be difficult to imagine. He was bare-headed, and his irregular teeth were clearly visible in his wide, gaping mouth. Though his complexion was sallow it was not black, his race having acquired the appellation of Black Dwarfs from the colour of their black jackets and caps. His nose was long and twisted; his legs were gnarled like an old oak branch, his shoulders were high, and his arms were long and thin, while his hands were like the claws of a dragon.

All this Rumpelheim took in at a glance, and he would gladly at that moment have run away without a thought of the object of his visit; but the large gooseberry-eyes of the Black Dwarf were fixed upon him, and seemed to root him to the place where he stood. At length the Minister overcame his trepidation, and screwing up his courage he called aloud to the occupant of the tree—"Come down, Black Dwarf, come down, for I seek thy help."

The Dwarf, however, seemed unwilling to leave the elder-tree, for the only reply he vouchsafed was a "To-whit! tu-whit! haloo! haloo!"

"Nay," said Rumpelheim, who by this time had completely regained his composure, "I pray thee come down, for I come as a friend to ask thy aid, and am ready to reward thee handsomely for thy services."

This intimation must have been pleasant to the ears of the Black Dwarf, for this time his answer was a weird laugh, which, in truth, was hardly less frightsome than his previous response. However, Rumpelheim was not to be diverted from his purpose, so after a short pause he again called upon the Black Dwarf to come down. At length he did so, and as he descended, the Minister noticed that he carried a small black cap under his arm. The Black Dwarf approached his visitor, whom he scrutinised closely, and having completed his examination, opened the conversation by an interrogative grunt, intended, we presume, to be—"Well?"

"You are, no doubt, surprised that I should seek you?" said Rumpelheim.

"Rather!" replied the Black Dwarf, with an ugly leer, which made him appear more odious than before.

This reception was not such as to make Rumpelheim's task an easy one, but he proceeded as best he could.

"The fondness of thy race for precious gems is well known to me," said the Minister, "and I would gratify it."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Black Dwarf, and in doing so opened his mouth to its utmost extent. "And the service asked?"

INTERVIEW BETWEEN RUMPELHEIM AND THE BLACK DWARF.

"Is to carry out a scheme which will benefit one whom I am anxious to gratify."

The gooseberry eyes rolled ominously about, and then settled upon Rumpelheim, to whom the Black Dwarf nodded to proceed.

"I am," said the Minister, "one of the fairies who inhabit this neighbourhood, and I came to you under circumstances which I will explain. Our queen is the renowned Pimpelina, the most beautiful and august of all the fairy sovereigns. It is not, therefore, surprising that her loveliness should have won the heart of her gallant cousin and subject, the Prince Frizzoli; and none doubted that he would share her throne. Nothing happened to make his success doubtful until lately, when a knight—a stranger to our race—visited our Court, and, by his handsome person and noble bearing, won—as I fear—the heart of Pimpelina. I need hardly say, that under these circumstances the Prince's feelings towards the intruder are not of the most friendly character; and I am here to seek your aid in an attempt to regain for him the heart of the Queen."

"Ha, ha! But go on," said the Black Dwarf.

"Pardon me," continued Rumpelheim; "but if I mistake not, you will not be unwilling to bear so fair a lady company for a while?"

"Well, well," replied the Black Dwarf, with an odious leer; "beauty is a weakness with my race, and if the Queen be as fair as thou sayest, why, then, the adventure would not be a distasteful one, and my abode would be less lonesome when honoured by so fair a guest."

"Ah! but let us understand our bargain," said Rumpelheim; "I have heard of thy readiness to join in exploits of this kind, but thou must know that my object in seeking thee is not to gratify thy love of the fair sex, but to secure the hand of Pimpelina for her cousin, the Prince."

"Tut, tut," muttered the Black Dwarf, "that's an entirely different affair." Then after a short pause he asked, "Why then seekest thou my aid?"

"Because I offer thee what thou wilt prefer even to the Queen," replied Rumpelheim.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Dwarf, "and what may that be?"

"Listen. What I propose is, that thou shalt bear the Queen to thy abode, where she is to be treated with the respect and consideration due to her rank, and where the Prince, her suitor, is to be allowed admittance to her presence. His visit will, of course, be made to appear as the result of his love, which had

braved all dangers to accomplish her rescue. By these means he will secure her gratitude, nay, her love, and whilst he will have gained a queen thou wilt have obtained a recompense not, in thy eyes, less valuable. The Prince is rich, and possesses jewels of immense value; and, believe me, he will not be niggardly in rewarding thee, for these"—producing the ruby ring and precious stones—"are thy proffered reward."

The Black Dwarf chuckled, for of all his vices cupidity was the greatest, and the offer made to him seemed likely to gratify it to the utmost. Rumpelheim well knew the weakness of the strange being whose aid he had sought, and indeed it was in reliance upon it that he ventured to entrust the carrying out of his scheme to the Black Dwarf, who, after satisfying himself as to the value of the reward he was to receive, readily acceded to the Minister's proposals.

"And now," said Rumpelheim, "let no time be lost, for the matter brooks not of delay. One hour after the moon rises on the morrow, the Queen will take a drive unaccompanied, save by two ladies-in-waiting. Let this prove thy opportunity. But I must learn, ere we part, how the Prince shall gain entrance to thy dwelling."

"Let him," said the Black Dwarf, "meet me here

at the third rising of the moon, and I will myself conduct him to the Queen."

"Methinks that were too long an imprisonment for her Majesty," said Rumpelheim.

The Black Dwarf frowned.

"Nay, I meant not that," added Rumpelheim, quickly.

"Well, take my advice, and be not in too great haste to relieve me of her presence, else she may not prove so ready to fall into the arms of the Prince, her cousin."

"True," said Rumpelheim, "so let it be as thou sayest. Thou doubtest not of thy reward?"

"Not I," replied the Dwarf; "for it should fare badly with ye both were it not forthcoming."

And so they parted, and Rumpelheim returned to relate to the Prince what had transpired at his interview with the Black Dwarf. When Rumpelheim had left him, the Prince almost regretted the part he was taking, for his conscience reproached him for plotting against her happiness. He tried, however, as men too often do under similar circumstances, to stifle these reproaches by persuading himself that, after all, the Queen's absence would be but of short duration, and that the joy of her rescue would make her forget the

sufferings incident to her abduction. And was it not, he argued, for Pimpelina's own future happiness, and that of her people, that she should bestow her hand upon one of her own race rather than upon this stranger knight? In this wise the Prince at length persuaded himself that to do a great right it was pardonable to do a little wrong.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TARNKAPPE.

"Of wild dwarfs I oft have heard men declare
They dwell in hollow mountains; and for defence they wear
A thing called a Tarn-cloke, of wonderful nature."

HAD Rumpelheim been aware that his interview with the Black Dwarf had been witnessed, he would certainly have been as unhappy as he deserved to be. Every word that had been spoken between the two had been heard by Elberich, who, though invisible to the plotters, had stood close to them during the whole of their conversation. How could this be? Well, the fact was that the Dwarf was possessed of a Tarnkappe, or mantle of invisibility, and having thrown this over his shoulders, he had dogged the steps of the Minister, and had heard the wicked bargain made in the forest; and when the two parted, he kept Rumpelheim company back to Fairy-Land.

How Elberich had become possessed of the Tarn-

kappe was a secret which he had never divulged,—indeed none else knew of his possession. Fortunately, however, we are able to relate how he had become the owner of so valuable a treasure.

It happened in this wise: One night, some years before, Elberich had been amusing himself by gathering roots in the forest near the Knight's dwelling, and as he was digging into a mound of earth he came upon a passage which appeared to run for some distance underneath. He thought, at first, that it was a rabbit burrow, and continued his digging; but he was startled at hearing a small, though angry, voice call upon him to cease, as he was overturning the roof of the speaker's dwelling. Elberich was, of course, very much astonished, but, being of a kind heart, he at once ceased work, and, in reply to the voice within, said he was sorry if he had unwittingly done any mischief. He then went to another part of the forest, and began digging there for the roots he was in search of, and whilst he was busily at work, who should approach him but a tiny fellow, scarce an ell in length, who carried on his arm a small cloak.

"I wish," said the little man to Elberich, "to do thee a service, for I know thou hast a kind heart, and wouldst not willingly do harm to any one."

"Indeed I would not," said Elberich.

"Well, then," continued the little one, "I will give thee this cloak as a recompense for thy goodness."

"I thank thee heartily," said Elberich; "but, pray, of what use to me can so small a cloak be? for though I am myself called a dwarf by reason of my small stature, this would prove but an indifferent cover to my back."

"Ah!" replied the Elf—for such he was; "it's value lies not so much in its warmth as in the property which is peculiar to itself, and which may prove of great service to thee. See!" he exclaimed, as he threw the cloak over his shoulder, and forthwith disappeared from Elberich's sight. In the next moment he reappeared, with the cloak on his arm, as when he first introduced himself.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Elberich, in joyful astonishment.

"Take it," said the Elf, giving the cloak to the Dwarf, "and may it prove of service to thee in time of danger; and when thou usest it, remember that it was given to thee by one who is the friend of the generous and the kind-hearted. Adieu!" And the Elf disappeared as suddenly as he had presented himself.

Although he had often put it on to satisfy himself that what had happened was a reality and not a dream, Elberich had never, until now, had occasion to make use of its strange power, and when he threw it over his shoulder he did not fail to remember whose gift it was, or to be grateful to the Elf.

The cloak had, moreover, not only enabled him to become acquainted with the plot hatched by Rumpelheim and the Fairy Prince, but had revealed to him the quality of the cap which the Black Dwarf had carried under his arm. This, as Elberich discovered, possessed the same property as his prized Tarnkappe; and he knew that if he could once possess himself of it, he would be able to deprive the Black Dwarf of the power of becoming invisible to him, and would also command access to his dwelling.

On his return to Fairy-Land, Elberich thought over all that occurred, and hesitated whether he should divulge the treasonable conspiracy to the Knight. It grieved him to allow the plot to be carried into effect, for he knew what suffering it would entail upon Pimpelina. He argued, however, that he would best serve the interests both of the Queen and his master, by allowing the wicked scheme to be carried into execution, and its authors to suffer the penalty of

their crime. Whilst averse to keeping the matter secret from the Knight, he felt sure that, if he revealed it to him, Siegfried would, in his turn, discover it to the Queen, and the conspirators would thus escape the punishment they merited. For what, thought the Dwarf, would be easier than for them to deny all knowledge of the matter, were they at once to be charged with having plotted against their sovereign? And how, indeed, could their guilt be proved? They would, most probably, attribute the vilest motives to the Knight were he to bring so grave a charge against their loyalty and honour. "It is to secure his own ends," they would shamelessly aver, "that the Knight has made so foul an accusation against the cousin and minister of the Queen. His object is too transparent —the securing of her hand; and fearing a successful rival in the Prince, he seeks to work his ruin by trumping up a base and calumnious charge of treason."

These considerations decided Elberich to keep his own counsel, at least for the present, and not to reveal the plot which he had discovered and intended to thwart.

CHAPTER X.

ABDUCTION OF THE FAIRY QUEEN.

" Along a river-side that ran wide-winding through a wood,
We walked, the Fairy Queen and I, in loving solitude;
And there, serenely, on the trees, in all their rich attire,
Sat crested birds whose plumage seemed to burn with harmless fire."

" This ugly creature in his arms her snatch'd,
And through the forest bore her quite away."

PIMPELINA did not quit Fairy-Land for a drive in the forest until late on the night succeeding the interview between her Minister and the Black Dwarf. The hours, however, were spent in a manner very pleasant both to herself and the Knight, for they passed them in each other's society, and drank of Love's cup, which was filled to overflowing. Though no declaration of his passion had been made by Siegfried, Pimpelina regarded him with that satisfied complacency which her sex bestow upon the devotee whose love they are conscious of having secured. The Knight, however, could not thus control himself, for though he believed

that his love was returned by the Queen, he was, nevertheless, beset with the doubts that are common to suitors who have not actually become assured of success.

With hearts beating with love towards each other, the two walked, side by side, amid the fair bowers that surrounded the Queen's palace, exchanging remarks which to others would have sounded trivial, but which to them were of supreme moment. Filled with happy thoughts, and wrapt up in each other, they were heedless of the beauty of the scene through which they were passing, and scented not the sweet flowers which bloomed in their path. Now and again they came upon fountains of crystal beauty, and rills that babbled music to the perfumed air. Birds of gorgeous plumage flitted among the branches, or rested to make the groves melodious with their songs. And yet, not e'en the flowers were brighter than the hopes that filled the hearts of Pimpelina and the Knight; nor was the birds' carol sweeter than their own thoughts.

"My good cousin," remarked the Queen, "has been strangely absent from our Court since the joust."

"And yet I caught sight of his Highness in the garden only a few moments before I joined your Majesty," said Siegfried.

"I'm glad to hear it," said the Queen; "for I feared he might be still suffering from his fall."

"I should be grieved if it were so," said Siegfried; "for he is a brave and skilful rider in the lists."

"And yet, methinks, he was not the victor," added the Queen, with an arch smile.

"So fortune willed," replied Siegfried; "and though we may merit, we cannot command success."

"Ah, well!" sighed the Queen, "it may be so, and yet I cannot wish the event otherwise—for art thou not a visitor to our Court, in whose success we are in duty bound to feel an interest?"

"Victory under such circumstances was assured," replied the Knight, casting an impassioned look upon the Queen, whose eyes drooped beneath his ardent gaze.

Both felt they were venturing upon dangerous ground, and that the climax—hoped for, and yet in a sense feared by them—might come at any moment if the conversation continued in this strain; so Pimpelina, with the ready tact—or perversity—of her sex, turned it to other subjects. Siegfried could not but humour her, though he felt chagrined at his own stupidity in not having embraced the opportunity that had presented itself of urging his suit. It did not recur during their interview, which was shortly afterwards terminated by

the announcement that the Queen's carriage was in readiness.

Pimpelina's carriage was formed of two crystal shells, lined with squirrel-skins soft as down. Its wheels were coral, and its axles were ivory, whilst the ornaments were of burnished gold. It was drawn by two cream-coloured steeds of perfect form,—for although Pimpelina usually rode on a white squirrel, her carriage was usually drawn by these miniature palfreys.

When the Queen, who was accompanied by two of her ladies-in-waiting, had taken her seat, the coachman gently touched the beautiful animals with his ivory-handled and silk-corded whip, and away they sped, bearing not only those who were visible in the carriage, but the Dwarf also—he being rendered invisible by his Tarnkappe. He had taken his seat alongside of the coachman, who was, of course, ignorant of this companionship.

They passed into the open country, lighted on their way by the newly-risen moon. Fast sped the carriage, the rumble of the wheels and the notes of the nightingales alone breaking the silence of the night, for Pimpelina was unusually silent. Something seemed to presage to her coming misfortune, and the sadness induced by this feeling made her indisposed to con-

versation. Now and again she tried to throw off the tremor of which she was conscious, but her efforts were vain, and the silence continued unbroken as they passed from the pleasant green-sward, on which she had so often danced in merry mood, to the somewhat gloomy shade of the forest. The moonbeams cast their glamour upon the path along which the carriage rolled,—whilst the stars shone in myriad constellations. The screech of the owl was occasionally heard, and this only served to heighten the forebodings to which the Queen was a prey.

One of her attendants—Mametta—had observed the Queen's disquietude, and tried to divert her mind by pointing to the many beauties of the glade through which they were passing. It was evident, however, that Pimpelina regarded them not, and so Mametta—who had a shrewd suspicion as to the state of affairs—ventured to speak of the stranger Knight and his friend the Count. She praised the bravery and courtesy of the former, and betrayed, by her halting reticence, her interest in the latter. Indeed Pimpelina had not failed to observe the many little love passages that had occurred between the two, but had a pretty good idea how matters really stood with them. But pleasing as the reference to the Knight was, it failed to beguile

Pimpelina from her sad mood, and so conversation again lagged, and they approached the Black Dwarf's dwelling in silence.

Suddenly the horses reared, and upon her stretching forward to ascertain the cause of this, Pimpelina's heart sank within her, for she beheld the ugly face and figure of the Black Dwarf in their path. In a moment he had opened the carriage door, and, with a horrible leer, and with mock courtesy, invited the Queen to alight. She was too terrified to resist as the Black Dwarf drew her from the carriage, and no sooner had her feet touched the ground than he caught her fainting form in his arms, and hurried away. Meanwhile Mametta and her companion had made the forest ring with their screams,—whilst the coachman seemed paralysed by fear; and when he regained his senses Pimpelina and the Black Dwarf were nowhere to be seen, and none knew where they were. Stay! Elberich had seen all that had occurred, and had followed in the footsteps of the Black Dwarf. He, at least, had retained his coolness, and just as the Black Dwarf was about to enter his abode, he plucked the cap which the latter carried under his arm, and by this means enabled himself to enter the region into which the Queen was borne. The Black Dwarf was too much occupied with his burthen

to notice his loss, and so he entered the hill unconscious of his footsteps being dogged.

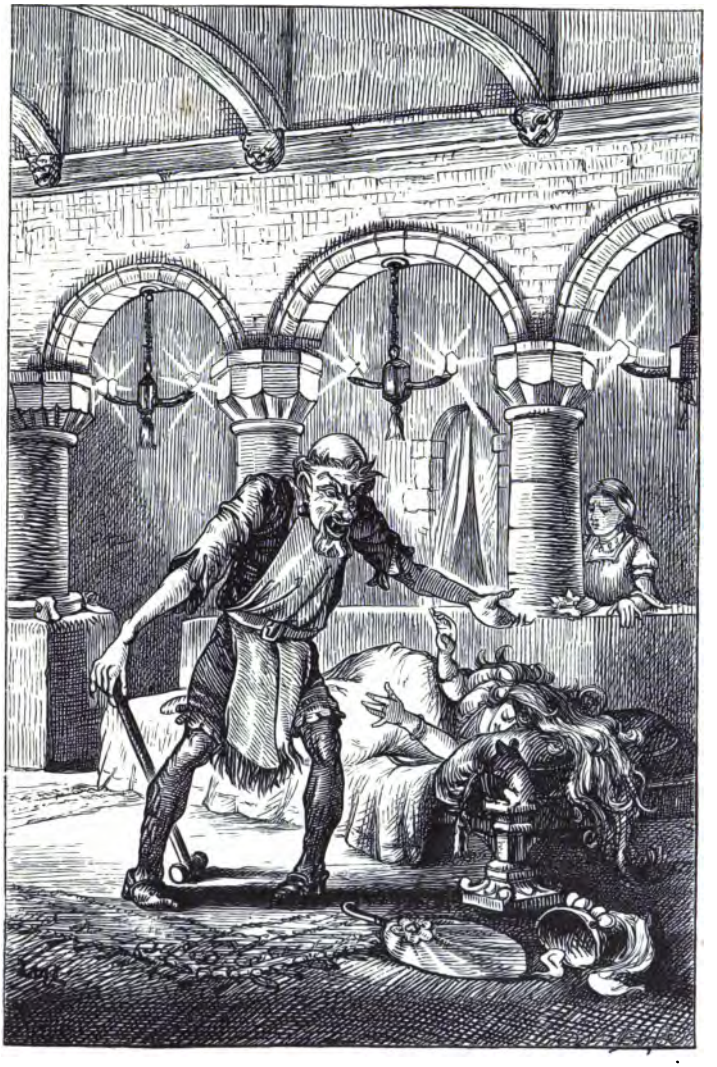
Ah! need we attempt to describe the feelings that agitated Mametta and her companion,—or to relate how they searched in vain for their missing and beloved Queen! Finding their search to be fruitless, they had no alternative but to return to Fairy-Land, and to communicate the sad intelligence. Terrible as was the news to her subjects, it seemed still more so to the Knight, who was for a time utterly prostrated by it. Nor was the Fairy Prince unmoved by the intelligence, and bitterly, at that moment, did he regret the mischief he had joined in plotting. Rumpelheim, however, consoled him with assurances of Pimpelina's speedy return as his affianced bride. And so the night passed, and wild lamentations filled the beautiful Fairy-Land.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLACK DWARF'S ABODE.

"Alas! said she, why born was I?
Right grievous is my destiny:
In this towere imprisoned,
I ne'er shall leave it till I'm dead."

POOR Pimpelina continued for some time in a state of total unconsciousness. The Black Dwarf's sudden appearance—realising so quickly her evil forebodings—proved too great a strain upon her nerves, and she fell into a swoon from which she recovered but slowly. The pallor of her beautiful face, and her deathlike insensibility to all that was occurring around her, were almost more than Elberich could bear, and it was with much difficulty that he restrained himself from casting off the Tarnkappe, and endeavouring to restore her to consciousness. Fortunately, however, he succeeded in checking this impulse—consoling himself with the thought that so soon as she revived he would make his



THE FAIRY QUEEN AND THE BLACK DWARF.

presence known to her, and would strive to reassure her with the promise of certain and speedy rescue.

Let us, in the meanwhile, take a glance round the Black Dwarf's dwelling.

The room where Pimpelina lay was as splendid as her own palace. The roof was studded with precious stones, which shone with resplendent lustre. Ivory tables, and chairs of chased silver and gold, stood about the apartment, the walls of which were covered with rich tapestry. Artificial birds of gorgeous plumage flitted about, and mimicked notes with marvellous accuracy. The floor was of perfect marquetry. Adjoining was a kind of boudoir, of smaller dimensions, though of equal beauty and splendour. Then came a room of very different character—the one wherein the Black Dwarf worked in metals. Around it were hung productions in steel of an extraordinary kind—coats of mail, incredibly fine, but of marvellous strength ; swords of exceeding lightness, but exquisitely tempered. On shelves and stands were to be seen articles in gold and silver ; caskets and cups, and personal ornaments, moulded and chased with perfect art. In the centre of the apartment stood an anvil, whilst in one corner was the furnace in which he melted the ore.

The Black Dwarf gazed upon Pimpelina with leering

eyes,—his hands resting on his hips, and his feet apart. He remained thus for several minutes, and then—as if struck by a sudden thought—exclaimed, in a tone of surprise and anxiety, "Mein Kappe!" The little cap which he had carried under his arm he now missed for the first time. Having searched his dwelling for it in vain, he went outside to look for it. Failing to find it, he was filled with anger and anxiety, for he well knew the power the finder of it would possess over him. At length he returned to the room where Pimpelina still lay unconscious. His mood boded no pity for her sufferings. When, however, he approached her couch he appeared to forget, for the moment, the cause of his disquietude, for her beauty made him oblivious of all else. But his loss recurred to him again and again, causing him grave uneasiness; and it was only by persuading himself of the improbability of anyone having found his lost treasure that he regained his usual composure.

Perceiving that Pimpelina showed no signs of recovery, he went into another room, and shortly returned with a gold phial containing a perfume of sweetest odour; and with this he bathed her brow and temples. At length she heaved a deep sigh, and slowly opened her eyes; but when she caught sight of the

Black Dwarf she started violently, and closed them again. She struggled to reduce her thoughts to order, in the hope of dispelling the horrid illusion, but when she reopened her eyes and again saw the hateful figure, the events of the night recurred to her with painful vividness.

"Nay, fair Queen," said the Black Dwarf, in his most soothing tones; "fear not, for none shall harm thee."

Pimpelina strove to regain her composure, but in vain.

The Black Dwarf, noticing her tremor, continued: "Your happiness, beauteous lady, is my single care, and never did beauty own a greater slave. All the splendour of this place and its untold wealth are thine."

The Queen remained silent, but pressed her hand tightly to still the wild throbbings of her heart.

"Why, methinks, fair lady, that e'en the birds sing sweeter by reason of thy presence, and look disconsolate at thy lack of appreciation."

"Oh! what means all this?" sobbed Pimpelina, piteously. "Why am I here? What object hast thou in view? Speak! Speak! for pity's sake."

"Time will show," said the Black Dwarf. "Let it suffice to calm thee, that no ill shall befall thee."

"I thank thee at least for this assurance," said Pimpelina, regaining somewhat of composure; "but why have I been brought here if no harm be intended?"

"That cannot be revealed to thee, fair Queen," answered he; "nor suits it my humour to see so much distress in one so lovely."

The Black Dwarf then left the room, and shortly afterwards the clink of his anvil sounded through the rooms and alarmed Pimpelina, who was at a loss to discover whence it proceeded. Whilst she was listening to the sounds with an inquisitive and astonished look, a little girl slipped quickly, but quietly, into the apartment, and motioned the Queen to silence. She then advanced to the couch, and kneeling beside Pimpelina, took hold of her hand and pressed it silently to her lips. The Queen placed her hand upon the girl's head, which was covered with clusters of bright golden locks, and, stooping, pressed a kiss upon her forehead.

"I am very, very sorry to see you here, fair lady," whispered the little maid; "for I fear it will be long ere you quit this horrid place."

"But how came you here?" inquired Pimpelina, her own fears giving place to the interest aroused in her by the little one.

"I was stolen by the Black Dwarf whilst playing in the meadows near home one evening—long, long, ago;" and tears filled the little one's eyes.

"But it cannot surely be so very long since this happened," said the Queen, "for you are still very young."

"I am fifteen," answered the little one, proudly.

"Well, tell me, dear, how it all happened, and why you are still here."

The little maid looked round anxiously to see if the Black Dwarf were returning, but the clink! clink! of his anvil having satisfied her that he was still busily at work, she began her story, though in a subdued whisper.

"My name is Emilia Rosen, and I am the only child of my parents, who live a few miles from here. I used to run about the fields gathering flowers for amusement, and because it pleased my father to have them about the house,—and when I took them to him he would lift me up in his arms and kiss me, and call me his darling little one." Here Emilia left hold of the Queen's hand and sobbed bitterly, though she stifled her agitation as well as she could, lest the Black Dwarf should hear her. Pimpelina's eyes were suffused with tears, but she did her utmost to comfort the little one. In a short time Emilia continued:—

"One evening I was busy as usual in the fields

plucking cowslips and daisies, when I heard a footstep, and looking round I saw the Black Dwarf quite close to me. I was too frightened to scream, and he told me not to be afraid, for he was a good fairy who had come to bless me; and he then told me a funny story that made me laugh; and when he had thus interested me he said he lived in a beautiful palace at a short distance, and promised, if I would go with him, to show me all its treasures, and to send me home laden with presents for my parents. Knowing how hard they had to work for their bread, I was delighted with the prospect of being able to take them gifts far more precious than the simple flowers they prized so much. I therefore readily consented to accompany him, and on our way he beguiled me with many strange tales, and I ran by his side unconscious of the distance we were putting between us and my home. When we came to the sand-hill he said his palace was beneath it, and then led me in and showed me all its wonders. And is it not a beautiful place?" she asked, looking up into Pimpelina's face, forgetting for the moment her troubles. The Queen nodded, whereupon the little one resumed:—

"When I had seen all the rooms and everything in them, I asked him for the presents he had promised to give me for my parents. He said he would fetch them,

and told me to rest while he did so. I was very tired with the long walk, for I had been playing about the fields all day long, so I sat down upon this couch and soon fell asleep, and dreamt of the beautiful things I was to take back home with me. When I awoke I could not remember for a time where I was, and thought I must still be dreaming, but I soon recalled what had passed, and felt afraid. I rose from the couch and went in search of the Black Dwarf, but as I could not find him I lay down again, and sobbed myself to sleep. When I awoke a second time he came to me, and I begged him to take me home again. I cared nothing then for his presents, for I was frightened, and knew how unhappy my absence would make my dear parents. The Black Dwarf only laughed at my distress, and told me I was a little goose not to prefer a beautiful palace to a poor cottage. I pleaded to be allowed to return home, but all in vain; and ever since I have had to remain here to cook his meals and drudge for him, and I fear my poor parents will have died of grief at the loss of their only one." Here Emilia sobbed as if her heart would break. "When I found he would not let me go, I begged him at least to let them know I was alive, for I thought the knowledge of this would make the loss of me less hard to bear. He promised to do so, but I

feel sure he did not. Well, that is a long time since—at least it seems so; but I cannot tell how long, for there is neither day nor night here: it is always the same—always the same light shed by the diamonds in the roof, not that of the beautiful sun or moon. Ah! how I should like to see them again, and to gather flowers in the green fields as I did before I was enticed away by the wicked Dwarf."

"And has he been cruel to you?" asked Pimpelina.

"Not exactly that," answered the little one; "but he is so very ugly, and he makes me cook his meals and wait upon him, and as I hate him I am very, very unhappy;" and she sobbed bitterly.

"But why do you not leave him?"

"I can't; and I believe I shall never quit this dreadful place. He did once tell me that if anyone could find out his name he would have to let me go, but he laughed at the idea, as if it were ridiculous to think of any being able to discover it. I have often heard him repeat it in his songs, but have never succeeded in making it out. Indeed he once confessed to having chosen it because of its strangeness, and said that even if anyone happened to hear it they would not be able to pronounce it; and so there is no hope of my ever being able to escape." Then, after a pause, she

asked, "But how came such a beautiful lady as you here? He couldn't entice you here as he did me, with pretty tales and promises of presents?"

"Ah, no!" replied Pimpelina; "I fainted in the forest when the Black Dwarf stopped my carriage, and on recovering I found myself in this place; so you see," she added, with an attempt at gaiety, being wishful to comfort Emilia, whose story had so much interested her, "you will have a companion, and we must put our heads together and see if we cannot hit upon a plan of escape."

"I fear it will be of no use," said Emilia; "but I should feel very glad to have you with me if your being here would not make you unhappy."

"But perhaps I shall discover his name, and then we shall be free, and you will return to your home."

"Ah! it is impossible. You will never guess it, and even if you heard you could never remember it; it is so strange."

"But cannot you give me a notion of what it is like? Perhaps I may be able to guess it," said Pimpelina.

"Indeed I wish I could, but alas! I cannot."

"Well, perhaps you would recognise it if you heard it again?"

"I don't know," replied Emilia, doubtfully; "it is

such a strange one. Had it been possible to make it out, you may be quite sure he would never have uttered it in my presence, for he would not like losing me."

"Then you have often heard it?" asked the Queen.

"Oh, yes! many times, for it is his habit to sing a song ending with it; but though I have tried my best to make it out, I have always failed."

"I fear, then," said Pimpelina, "it would be useless my attempting to guess it. However, if I hear him sing, I may, perhaps, be more fortunate than you have been."

Emilia's face brightened at the suggestion, and she would at once have rushed from the room to ascertain if the Black Dwarf was singing at his work as usual; but Pimpelina restrained her, fearing that she might be caught listening by the Black Dwarf, whose suspicions would be aroused.

The above conversation had been attentively listened to by Elberich, who wore his Tarnkappe, and was consequently invisible. Emilia's story had greatly interested him, and, as he hearkened to it, and saw her deep longing to return to her home, he determined to do his utmost to gratify her desire. He remembered a fact which he had for the time forgotten, namely, that, although the possession of the Black Dwarf's cap placed him at his service, it did not enable him to release

Pimpelina and Emilia from their captivity. He was therefore rejoiced to learn how their escape might be secured, and determined to lose no time in trying to find out the Black Dwarf's name. He accordingly went straight to the workshop where the Black Dwarf was busily occupied in fashioning a gold shield of marvellous beauty. Elberich stayed a while, but not a word escaped the lips of the busy workman; the only sounds that broke the silence being the beat of the hammer, and the clink! clink! of the anvil. At length, and just at the moment when Elberich was about to rejoin the Queen and Emilia, a low gutteral sound issued from the lips of the Black Dwarf. "Ah!" chuckled Elberich, "this is the prelude to his song;" and he listened more intently than before, in the hope of catching the desired name. For a while he was disappointed—the sound ceasing almost as soon as it had begun; and the hope he had cherished seemed doomed to disappointment. After a time, however, the Black Dwarf lifted up the shield, and scrutinising and admiring it, he sang, though but half audibly, the words—

> "To-night I work in silver and gold,
> For love of the craft I learnt of old;
> But to-morrow I make her mine, I ween,
> My beautiful captive—the Fairy Queen."

Having proceeded thus far, he ceased singing and resumed his work; but Elberich felt sure he would resume the song, so he waited patiently and listened very attentively, and at length his patience was rewarded, for the Black Dwarf, having finished his labours, croaked, rather than sung, the remainder of his ditty—

"For none can free her, not knowing my name;
And who can pronounce though they hear the same?
And so at the fairies, her friends, I can laugh,
Till they learn the name of LLANFAICMATHAFARNEITHAF."

Poor Elberich had kept his ears wide open to catch the name, but, quick and clever as he was, he failed. All that he succeeded in remembering were the first and last syllables, the rest being lost as completely as if he had never heard it. He stayed some little time longer in the workshop, in the hope of hearing the song again, but he listened in vain; and fearing the Black Dwarf would soon quit the room, he returned to Pimpelina and her companion, who were still engaged in conversation. He stood close behind the Queen—invisible in his Tarnkappe; and as soon as there was an interval of silence, he whispered in her ear—"A friend is guarding you, though you cannot see him."

Pimpelina, being naturally much startled, turned

quickly round to see who had addressed her, and was surprised to find that she and Emilia were alone. That some one had whispered to her she could not doubt, for were not the words clearly uttered, and as clearly remembered?

"Have courage, your Majesty," whispered Elberich, "and fear no harm, for, though unseen, one is near to guard and help you."

These words made Pimpelina's heart beat wildly with joy. She was no longer in fear; but, turning her head, she said, in a low voice: "Oh! speak thy name, so that I may know who it is that befriends me."

"I am Elberich, the Dwarf," he replied; "and in order to calm your fears I will—though only for a moment, lest the Black Dwarf should return—cast off my Tarnkappe so that you may see me. But first prepare Emilia, lest she be startled when I reveal myself, and recall the Black Dwarf by her cries."

"A friend is near," said the Queen to her companion, "who will rescue us both."

"Where?"

"In this room."

"Nay, lady, else should I see him."

"Well, it is true neither you nor I can see him at present, but he has whispered his name to me, and

promised to reveal himself to us for a moment, if you will not be frightened, and alarm the Black Dwarf."

"That I won't," said Emilia, proudly.

"Well, then, I may tell him you are prepared?"

"Oh, yes!"

Elberich threw off his Tarnkappe, and became at once visible.

"I must away, your Majesty," said he, "to communicate what has happened to my master, and to arrange for your rescue from this place. Fear not, for I shall return on the morrow. So farewell for the present;" and he resumed his cloak, and became again invisible.

"Joy! joy!" exclaimed the Queen; "we shall soon be rescued from the Black Dwarf."

"But what did he mean by addressing you as your Majesty?" asked Emilia, whose curiosity overcame for the moment her anxiety to escape from the Black Dwarf.

"Well, you must know that I am Pimpelina, the Fairy Queen."

"Oh! how nice," exclaimed her companion, who regarded her with even greater admiration and delight than before.

The Queen caressed Emilia, and assured her of her

protection and help, and, although this assurance brought joy to the little one, she felt doubtful of the realisation of it, for how, she inquired, could any one get away unless they knew the name of the Black Dwarf?

"Indeed, I know not," replied the Queen; "but I know that Elberich—for that is the name of him you have just seen—will keep his promise, and the Knight has told me he is possessed of marvellous powers."

This reference to the Knight led, of course, to questionings as to who he was, and Pimpelina portrayed him in such glowing colours as to divulge, to herself at least, the true state of her feelings towards him.

Whilst this interesting conversation was proceeding, the Black Dwarf entered the apartment, and ogled his ugly eyes in admiration of Pimpelina, who closed hers at the odious sight. Then, turning to Emilia, he exclaimed:

"Away! and serve supper; for work begets hunger even in me." And she hastened from the room.

"I cannot eat," said Pimpelina, with tremor.

"Tut, tut," said the Black Dwarf, "the little one will entice back thy appetite, for she is no novice at preparing a feast fit e'en for a queen."

Pimpelina remained silent, and shortly afterwards

Emilia returned bearing a silver tray, containing dishes of strange character, and small gold cups, marvellously chased, at the sight of which the Black Dwarf became strangely boisterous. Filling a cup to the brim with wine, he handed it to Pimpelina, who, however, declined to taste it, whereupon he exclaimed—"Then, fair Queen, drink to me with thine eyes;" and then sang—

> "'Tis wine from the beautiful Rhine,
> That maketh the sad to laugh;
> So drink it and thou shalt be mine—
> The bride of LLANFAICMATHAFARNEITHAF."

Oh, how Pimpelina strove to catch that name!

Emilia waited upon the Black Dwarf, who ate a hearty meal of bats' wing and plovers' eggs, ending with a dish of the smallest wild strawberries. The latter looked fresh and sweet, and Pimpelina, seeing how distressed Emilia appeared at her abstinence, consented to partake of them.

After the removal of the dishes, the Black Dwarf said to Pimpelina:

"And now, fair lady, one word ere I leave you. Your beauty hath won my heart," and placing his big ugly hand to his heart, he bowed; "and it only remains for you to decide upon your future. Great as

my power is over you, I cannot—else would I—compel you to become mine; but if you will not consent to this, you will have to share Emilia's duties for seven long years. If, however, you listen to reason, you will be free to come and go as it please you. Nay, nay, give not thy answer now, sweet one, for it were well for thee not to be too hasty, lest hereafter thou repent thy refusal. And," added he, "a worse fate might be thine than sharing the home of the Black Dwarf;" and, rising, he quitted the apartment with a hateful grimace.

Oh! why did he not repeat his name that she might have another chance of discovering it? He had been too wily for that; and so poor Pimpelina retired to rest, comforted, however, by the recollection of the promise which Elberich had given.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WHITE DWARF.

"The goodwill of the benefactor is the fountain of all benefits."

No sooner had Elberich quitted the abode of the Black Dwarf than he strode hastily away. He puzzled his brain as to how he might discover the Black Dwarf's name, and at length his thoughts recurred to the benefactor to whom he was indebted for the Tarnkappe, and who had promised him aid in any future difficulty. No sooner had Elberich recalled this promise than he decided to make haste to claim its fulfilment at the hands of the White Dwarf. Undeterred by the long journey before him, Elberich started briskly upon his way, rejoiced at the prospect of the speedy deliverance of the Fairy Queen and Emilia. On he trudged, beguiling his fatigue by snatches of song. The freshness of the coming morn lent strength to his weary limbs, and he marked with joy the breaking of the dawn, the deepening colours in the horizon, and the advent of the

sun. On he sped, hour after hour, until at length he found himself near the entrance to the White Dwarf's home under the sandhill. He stamped three times, and then waited anxiously for the White Dwarf's appearance. He had not, however, long to wait; for in a few moments a small figure appeared, and, approaching him, exclaimed, "Welcome, Elberich! Thy visit, though long delayed, was not unexpected."

Elberich was certainly surprised to hear this; but he was too anxious to explain the reason of his visit to waste time in questionings.

"I come," he said, "to claim the fulfilment of the promise made when you gave me the Tarnkappe. You will remember telling me to seek your aid whenever I might require it?"

"Yes; and now thou requirest it?"

"Truly; and I hope you may be as able as willing to help me."

"Well, come to the point at once," said the White Dwarf, who certainly did not seem to anticipate any serious tax upon his powers.

"The fact is," said Elberich, "that a Black Dwarf has stolen Pimpelina, the Fairy Queen, and a bright little maiden called Emilia, and keeps them prisoners in his dwelling under the sandhill. The poor things

are, of course, very unhappy, and I am anxious to rescue them. Your good gift of the Tarnkappe enabled me to gain access to them, but I then learnt that it would be impossible to get them out of his clutches until I had discovered his name, and although he sang it in my hearing—for the cloak did me good service in rendering me invisible—I could not for the life of me make it out, and so I am come to ask you to help me to solve the riddle."

"Ah! ah! and lives the Black Dwarf alone?"

"Oh, yes; there is none in his dwelling save the Fairy Queen and Emilia."

"And he sang?"

"That did he—if singing it could be called," said Elberich.

"But surely thou remember'st at least something of the song?"

"Oh, yes! but unfortunately I could not catch the important part of it, else I need not have troubled you."

"Repeat to me, at least, as much as thou canst of it," said the White Dwarf.

"I can remember all except the name which began with 'Llan,' and ended with 'haf.' It ran thus:—

> "Therefore at the fairies, her friends, I can laugh
> Till they speak the name of Llan-haf."

"Ah! ah!" laughed the White Dwarf, "and so he has been at his old tricks again, has he? Well, well, we must see if we cannot thwart the fellow."

"You know him then?" asked Elberich.

"For as malevolent a rascal as ever dwelt under a sandhill," replied the White Dwarf.

"And his name?"

"Llanfaicmathafarneithaf!"

"The very same!" exclaimed the delighted Elberich. "But even when you speak it I can hardly repeat his name, so that my remembering it is impossible. What then is to be done?"

"Listen," replied the White Dwarf. "The Black Dwarf is powerless to harm the Fairy Queen, for his power does not extend to those of her race. Still, though he cannot compel her to serve him, she may find escape difficult, and you acted wisely in seeking my help. Indeed, the little maid, of whom you spoke, will have to serve out her weary years of servitude, unless released by one who can compel his obedience by learning his name; and as you are interested in her as well as in the Fairy Queen, we must see what can be done to rescue both."

"Oh! how shall I thank you for your goodness?" exclaimed Elberich, gratefully.

"By being good and honest thyself," answered the White Dwarf; "and as thou art such, I will do what thou desir'st. Now, the name of the Black Dwarf is certainly very puzzling, and I fear thou would'st not be able to remember it even if I were to go on repeating it till you were weary of listening."

"What, then, can be done?"

"Listen. I knew the Black Dwarf of old, and the only thing he was ever known to take delight in was a Raven, which he taught to pronounce his own name. Thou wilt readily believe this was no easy task, but the failures of the bird amused its master, who, at length succeeded in his task, and the Raven can croak his name as glibly as he. Well, Flip one day provoked him by obstinately refusing to repeat its lesson, and in his cruel anger he struck the poor bird. From that moment it brooded over the cruel act, and at length managed to make its escape, and I had the good fortune to befriend it when it was almost dead of hunger. Since then, the Raven has been our companion, and has often amused us by repeating the name of its former master. And thus, thou see'st, the Black Dwarf may be defeated in his purpose by the poor bird which suffered from his ill treatment."

"But how?" inquired Elberich.

"Flip shall accompany thee, and will enable thee to accomplish thy purpose, for at sight of the Black Dwarf it will pronounce his name, and thou wilt then be able

to repeat it without having the trouble of trying to remember it on thy return."

"How can I be sufficiently grateful for this kindness!" exclaimed the delighted Elberich.

"As I have said; and now await my return."

The White Dwarf disappeared under the sandhill, but returned shortly with the Raven. "Take it," he said, placing it on Elberich's shoulder; "and when thou hast accomplished thy purpose, fail not to be grateful to it. And now, farewell."

Elberich lost no time in retracing his steps, the weary journey being beguiled by the strange croakings of the Raven, which remained perched upon his shoulders until he regained Fairy-Land.

CHAPTER XIII.

FLIP.

"In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore."

TIRED as Elberich was on his return to Fairy-Land, he at once set out in search of Siegfried, his master, being anxious to assuage the grief which the loss of Pimpelina had caused him. The Dwarf found him seated in the garden in company with the Count, who was doing his best to cheer his friend.

"Nay, fear not for the Queen," said the Count; "for though the Black Dwarf is wicked and malicious, he hath no power to harm her,—his power extends not to her race."

"And yet he hath stolen her, and none know how to gain access to his abode. How, then, can we rescue her from him?"

The Count, being unable to answer the question, remained silent.

"And if those of her own race cannot discover a means of rescuing her, how can *we* hope to do so?" asked the Knight.

"Well, I know not; but somehow I have confidence in Elberich's ability to help us in this emergency," replied the Count.

"Ah! I had forgotten him. Let us lose no time in seeking his counsel and assistance," said Siegfried.

"I have already been in search of him, but have failed to find him."

"Could no one direct you to him?" asked Siegfried.

"No; all I could learn was, that he had not been seen since the disappearance of the Queen. However, I have no doubt of his turning up presently, and we shall then hear what he suggests," said the Count.

"This suspense makes me miserable," said the Knight; "so let us make another attempt to find him. Ah! here he comes," he exclaimed joyfully, for the Dwarf appeared at that moment, chatting merrily to the Raven, which was perched upon his shoulder, looking as sedate and important as the most august of his kind.

"Welcome, Elberich!" said the Knight, "for we need thy counsel. But where hast thou been hiding thyself; and what means the strange bird that perches upon thy shoulder with an air of profound wisdom?"

The Raven answered for itself:

> "I am a proud Raven,
> With pall quite unshaven."

"Ah! ah! a merry bird, withal," said the Count. "How camest thou, Elberich, by such a treasure?"

"That you shall learn presently," replied Elberich; "for it is to prove of great service to us."

"Flip, as if it understood every word that was spoken, nodded its head solemnly, and then cried—

> "There once was a monk
> Who got very drunk."

"A droll bird, indeed," said Siegfried, laughing, "and one full of humorous conceits. Whence comes it?"

"Listen," said Elberich, seating himself on the ground, for he was worn-out with fatigue. The Raven well-nigh lost, but succeeded in retaining its balance. It seemed, however, to resent this change in Elberich's position, for it croaked angrily.

"Nay, don't be angry," said he, "and I will be more thoughtful in future;" and he stroked the bird into forgiveness. "And now," he proceeded, "for my story. You know, of course, what has happened to the Queen?"

"Alas! too well," replied the Count; "and it was to see if thou couldst suggest anything that I sought thee a while ago."

The Knight looked disconsolate, and remained silent.

> "Holoo! holoo! tu-wit! tu-whoo!
> Was aye the owl's halliballoo,"

cried Flip.

Siegfried and the Count were too much engrossed with thoughts of the Queen to heed the bird's ditty.

"Well, I saw how it all happened, for I was present at the time," said Elberich.

This announcement was received by the two friends with the utmost surprise.

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Knight.

"And Mametta knew it not?" inquired the Count.

"No; I was invisible to her," replied the Dwarf.

"Come, come, Elberich, explain thyself," said Siegfried.

"That will I, and in few words," said Elberich. "I occupied a seat on the box of the Queen's carriage during the drive which ended so unfortunately."

"How, then, could Mametta fail to see thee?" asked the Count.

"Because I wore my Tarnkappe," replied the Dwarf, and was consequently invisible."

"Tarnkappe!" exclaimed the two friends in one breath.

"Yes; it was the gift of my good friend, the White

Dwarf, and has proved right serviceable to me. Well, as I was saying, I wore my Tarnkappe, and was present when the Black Dwarf made off with the Queen."

"And couldst thou not rescue her?" inquired Siegfried.

"I followed her Majesty into the Black Dwarf's dwelling, as he bore her unconscious in his arms; and when opportunity offered, I threw off my Tarnkappe and discovered myself to the Queen, to whom I promised a speedy rescue."

"But now?" asked Siegfried excitedly.

The Raven appeared to think its turn had come to put in a word, for it said—

> "The fox got trapped one night, in the dark,
> As he stole a fat hen just by way of a lark!"

"Proceed, Elberich," said the Knight, who was too much interested in the subject of their conversation to pay heed to the interruption.

"I was fortunate enough to get possession of the Black Dwarf's cap, and by this means secured access to his abode."

"And yet thou art here without having rescued the Queen," said Siegfried.

"But from no fault of mine," said the Dwarf, who was hurt by the censure implied in this remark.

"Pardon me, Elberich; I was ungenerous," said Siegfried, extending his hand to the Dwarf.

"Then of what avail is the cap?" inquired the Count.

"I discovered," continued Elberich, not heeding the question, "that the only means of rescuing the Queen is by learning the name of the Black Dwarf; and, under cover of my Tarnkappe, I visited his workshop, in the hope of discovering his name. After waiting there a long time, he sang a doggerel verse which concluded with it."

"Hurrah!" shouted the Knight, springing to his feet in the excitement of the moment; "and Pimpelina is free!"

"Not so," said Elberich; "for though I heard the name, mortal lips, methought, could never pronounce it."

Siegfried relapsed into his former depression, and reseated himself by the side of the Count and Elberich.

"When I quitted the Black Dwarf's dwelling," said Elberich, "I cudgelled my brain how to discover his name, and at length I remembered the White Dwarf, who had given me the Tarnkappe, and had desired me to seek him if ever I should require his help. So off I set, and, having found my benefactor, I related to him what had occurred, when he promised to put me in the way of learning the Black Dwarf's name. He seemed

to know the Black Dwarf well, and told me his name, but as I dare not trust my memory with it, he lent me this Raven."

"And, pray, wherefore?" asked the Count.

"The Raven formerly belonged to the Black Dwarf, who ill-treated it, and the consequence was that it escaped from him at the first opportunity, and fell into the hands of the White Dwarf. Having lived with the Black Dwarf many years, the bird learnt his ditties, and can imitate him to perfection, so that, when I return to the Queen I shall take Flip with me, and at the sight of its former master it will utter his name, and the Black Dwarf will then be obliged to release the Queen. Now, is my absence explained?"

"Good Elberich!" was all that the Knight could answer.

"There is another besides the Queen, whom I am almost equally anxious to rescue from the Black Dwarf," said Elberich, who then related to them the story of little Emilia.

> "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I'm all in a flutter,
> For Puck has been and spoiled the butter!"

croaked the Raven.

"The history of the little maid deeply interested the two friends, who became equally anxious for her rescue.

"Let us set out at once," urged Siegfried.

"Nay, the daylight is hardly yet spent," said Elberich, "and I would fain steal a short repose before setting out. Indeed, it is better thus," he added, seeing the Knight's look of disappointment.

"Well, well, Elberich, we must needs be guided by thee, though I can hardly brook delay. But, as thou sayest, thou art weary and needest rest; so say when we shall start."

"When the star of thy nativity appears in the horizon," said the Dwarf; "and, in the meantime, keep your own counsel."

When Elberich had disappeared, the two friends vied with each other in extolling his goodness and capacity.

Ah! how wildly beat the heart of the Knight as he looked forward to meeting Pimpelina again. Before the interview with Elberich he had been very dejected, and Fairy-Land had scarce more charms for him than if it had been the Valley of Desolation. But now he listened with delight to the sweet songs of the birds that carolled above them. The hare-bells tinkled soft music, and seemed to be ringing in the happy time to come. Every grove shadowed forth the image of Pimpelina; the rippling waters murmured her name;

whilst every Grasshopper chirruped gaily in anticipation of her return. In arbour bedecked with flowers of every hue; on boughs where glittered tiny birds of gorgeous plumage; in brake and fell; by the murmuring rivulet and the plashing fount;—the form of Pimpelina seemed to arise; for that form filled Siegfried's heart, and made every sound musical with her name.

But another face was present to the mind of the Count—Mametta's; for Love had dawned upon their hearts, and they were happy in their troth.

After a long silence, Siegfried said—

"Thinkest thou the Queen returns my love?"

"If the flush that mantles her cheek at thy approach but speak truly, then indeed she doth," replied his friend.

"Nay, it may perchance be but the blush of maiden bashfulness," said the Knight.

"Ne'er knew I that bashfulness grew on acquaintance," said the Count. "Besides, the drooping eyelids; the hesitancy of speech; the thousand prettinesses which betray Love's secret, require but little wit to interpret them."

And thus with pleasant converse they wiled away the time—picturing to themselves the happy future when Pimpelina and Mametta should indeed be theirs.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LOVERS' INTERVIEW.

"Love is so fairy-like a part of us, that even a fairy cannot make it differently from us—that is to say, when we love truly."

The Pilgrims of the Rhine.

THE Black Dwarf was at a loss to understand the great change which had come over Emilia, who, until now, had been very unhappy. Month by month, nay, day by day, had she prayed him to restore her to the parents whom she loved so much, and who, she felt assured, were sorrowing at the loss of her. But he had disregarded her appeals, saying—"Twenty years is the term of thy service; and I'll not bate an hour of it." No wonder, therefore, that she had been unhappy, or that her eyes had often been swollen with weeping. But now all this was changed: she skipped from place to place, and made the Black Dwarf's dwelling echo with her laugh. This sudden and total change in her made him ponder, for he felt that it boded him

no good. As he failed to account for it he consoled himself with the reflection that for eighteen years longer must she remain with him; for he had no fear of the secret of his name being discovered. Learn his name, indeed! Pshaw! the thought was too absurd to be entertained, and so he dismissed the subject from his mind.

Nor had Pimpelina been without consolation, for her presence had gladdened the heart of Emilia, whose present happiness was a solace to her. And even should Elberich fail in his promise, she knew that the Black Dwarf was powerless to do her harm, and the utmost that could befall her would be the misery of being separated from her friends. Ah! but that separation would, she felt, be terrible to bear, and might, indeed, break her heart. It was whilst Pimpelina was occupied with these thoughts that the Black Dwarf appeared before her next day. He was evidently very wishful to impress her favourably, for he had taken unusual pains to make himself as presentable as possible. He had even been guilty of the extravagance of wearing a new suit; but it was all to no purpose. He failed lamentably in trying to be engaging. His smiles were but leers; his eyes only oggled the more when he tried to make them expres-

sive of tenderness; and his figure appeared still more ungainly when he attempted a graceful attitude. Addressing Pimpelina, he said:

"And now, fair Queen, you have seen the wealth which is lavished upon my abode; but what you have seen is naught as compared with what shall be yours if you will consent to become mine."

"Thy presence doth but deepen the loathing I feel for thee," replied Pimpelina.

"Nay, fair Queen, be not ungracious; for until now I have had but one passion—the passion of my race."

"Avarice!" said Pimpelina.

"Well, after all, it is but a virtue in excess," said the Dwarf; "and all that it hath led me to acquire I lay at thy feet, fair Queen."

"Anger me not," said Pimpelina, "with thy odious suit. I abhor thy presence, and pray thee to rid me of it."

At these words the Black Dwarf's face became almost livid with rage, and waving his long arms aloft, and shaking his clenched hands, he said, "Then hark thee, fair one. Though I am powerless to work thee evil, being as thou art of a race akin to mine own, yet art thou unable to escape from this place; and here thou shalt remain until thou hast become more

docile, and learnt to sue for the freedom I alone can bestow."

"I heed not thy threats," exclaimed Pimpelina, roused to indignation by this threat; "for I need only utter thy name to regain my freedom."

"Ah! ah! that's true enough, my fair one; but methinks thou wilt nevertheless tarry here a long while."

"Time will show," answered the Queen. "But leave me; for thy presence is odious, and thy threats idle as the wind."

"As thou wilt," said the Black Dwarf; "but when I return, maybe thy mood will be changed, and thy scorn turned to beseeching."

Pimpelina did not deign to speak further with him, and he accordingly left her to keep his appointment with Rumpelheim. No sooner had he departed than Emilia joined her.

"Isn't he an odious, disagreeable, wicked old Dwarf!" she exclaimed. "Oh! how I wish I knew his name."

"We must not despair of discovering it," said the Queen; "for I have faith in Elberich, and he promised to free us."

"But wasn't the Black Dwarf angry?" asked Emilia.

"Indeed he was; for he knew that his threats were idle, and that though he might keep me a prisoner, he could not accomplish his wicked purpose of making me his wife," replied Pimpelina.

"Well," said Emilia, "I hope the Dwarf will keep his promise, even if I have to stay here alone with the Black Dwarf, for I am grieved to see you a prisoner."

"That shall you not," said Pimpelina; "for Elberich has a good, kind heart, and will find means to restore you to your home, and me to my people."

"God grant he may!" exclaimed Emilia; "for I fear I should be more miserable than ever if I had to remain here without your companionship."

Emilia, having to prepare the Black Dwarf's supper, left the Queen, whose thoughts reverted to the events of the last few hours, and to those whom, as she well knew, were lamenting her absence. She had not, however, been thus occupied many minutes when she was startled by the appearance of the Knight, who hurried into the apartment, and fell upon his knee before her.

"My beloved! my queen!" he exclaimed passionately, and then pressed Pimpelina's hand to his lips. Pimpelina was too much affected by his sudden appearance to exhibit the coyness her sex so often affect under similar circumstances. At length she regained

sufficient composure to ask how he had succeeded in finding her and obtaining access to the Black Dwarf's dwelling.

"The Dwarf Elberich told me all that happened, and enabled me to gain this interview."

"But how?" inquired the Queen.

"By means of the Black Dwarf's cap," replied Siegfried. "And oh, my beloved! the agony I endured when Mametta related the events of yesternight. Till then, I knew not how I loved thee. The music of the hare-bell, the singing of the birds, the prattle of the brook, gave but one sound to mine ears—the name of Pimpelina. My heart reproved me for my foolish silence, and told me how vain were existence without thy love. From the first my heart has been captive to thy beauty; my thoughts have dwelt on thee alone; and when it seemed as if I had lost thee for ever, I learnt the depth and ardour of my passion."

"And thinkest thou, beloved one, that my thoughts have failed to dwell on thee, or my heart to confess the love it had learnt to feel?"

"My own!" muttered Siegfried. And thus was the old, old story told again; and Siegfried and Pimpelina plighted their troth, forgetful of the flight of time, and of the events of the last few hours. When at length their

thoughts recurred to what had happened, Pimpelina rose and said, "Let us hasten from this place, Siegfried."

"Nay, dearest; we must await Elberich, who has promised to discover the Black Dwarf's name, and to rescue both thee and Emilia."

"Ah! then he has told you about her?"

"Everything."

"But *you* surely are not a prisoner here?" asked Pimpelina in astonishment.

"It is even so," replied Siegfried; "for so soon as I had gained admission by means of the cap, I threw it outside in order that Elberich might himself gain entrance. Otherwise he would have been unable to rescue us."

"And hast thus imperilled thy own freedom in visiting me!" said Pimpelina, with a pressure of the hand, her eyes moistening with tears. These signs of her gratitude and affection more than compensated the Knight for the risk he had incurred.

"I did but gratify my own desire in coming here," said he, returning the pressure; "for life were not worth living without mine own."

And thus the moments flew apace, and the lovers were only recalled to a sense of their position by the entrance of Emilia, who started back at the sight of Siegfried.

"Emilia?" said Siegfried inquiringly.

"Oh!" exclaimed the little maid, clasping her hands and looking at Siegfried with unconcealed admiration. Then, as if conscious that she had acted somehow improperly, she turned and would have fled, had not the Queen arrested her flight.

"You see, Emilia, that another one is now in the Black Dwarf's keeping," said Pimpelina.

"But how did he get here? The Black Dwarf did not steal him, surely?"

"I had heard of you, Emilia, and came to see if you were really so very anxious to get away from the Black Dwarf," said Siegfried, with a smile.

"Oh! please don't," said Emilia, the tears coming into her eyes; "for I can never get away from this horrid place, and my poor parents will be heart-broken at my absence."

"Nay, nay, cheer up, little one, for we are all equally prisoners here; and if you cannot escape, neither can we," said the Knight.

Pimpelina drew Emilia to her, and kissed the tears away, assuring her of speedy deliverance.

"But we don't know the Black Dwarf's name," said the little maid in a doubtful tone; "and how then can we escape?"

"Be not incredulous," said the Queen; "but rest assured that all shall be well with thee, and that quickly."

Emilia's face brightened with joy at this assurance, and she flew from the room in the happy anticipation of leaving the Black Dwarf for ever, and of again seeing the parents she loved so dearly.

The Knight was anxious to see all the apartments in the Dwarf's dwelling, and so he and Pimpelina strolled about, admiring the magnificent objects which everywhere met their eyes—the brilliant gems which sparkled in the roof; the quaint and wonderful arabesques that studded the floor; the artificial birds which flew about and sang like real ones; and the chaste workmanship of the gold and silver articles which were scattered about. Then they examined the arms and armour made by the Black Dwarf. The Knight admired their fineness and strength, and wondered at the marvellous skill which had produced them. And thus the moments flew unheeded by them, for they were too happy in the presence of each other, and too much interested in all they saw, to note their flight. But whilst they had been thus employed, other events had happened which it is needful we should relate, so we must return to Elberich and the Black Dwarf.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BITERS BIT.

"Sin will pluck on sin."

SIEGFRIED, the Count, and Elberich, had driven together to within a short distance of the Black Dwarf's dwelling, and had then alighted, in order that their presence might not attract attention. The carriage was stationed where it would not be observed, for Elberich was anxious that it should not be seen by Rumpelheim, whose interview with the Black Dwarf he intended to witness. The Raven accompanied Elberich, and seemed perfectly contented with his shoulder for a perch. It preserved a most sedate air, and remained silent, even when Elberich saluted it, as he did occasionally, with words of kindness.

As soon as the Knight had entered the Black Dwarf's abode, and had returned the cap to Elberich, the latter led the Count to the place appointed for the

interview between Rumpelheim and the Black Dwarf. Fearing, however, that Flip might disclose their presence should it catch sight of its former master, Elberich took the precaution of tying the tips of its beaks together. He was, however, careful not to let this interefere with its breathing. This done, he led the Count to a position where they were likely to see, but not be seen by, those whose interview they had come to witness. The Count inquired who it was Elberich expected, but the Dwarf told him it was better he should learn for himself.

They had hardly reached the place of concealment when Elberich espied the Black Dwarf rocking himself upon one of the branches of the elder-tree he had occupied on the occasion of his interview with Rumpelheim. He did not, however, observe their approach, for Elberich had been careful to leave the beaten track, and thus to avoid being seen. The Count and he took up positions behind two trees, and awaited the anticipated interview. They did not venture to speak or even to whisper to each other, lest they should be heard by the Black Dwarf, whose position Elberich had indicated to his companion, at the same time motioning him to silence.

"Holoo! holoo! tu-wit! tu-whoo!" cried the Black Dwarf, in happy ignorance of being watched.

At the sound of this well-known cry, the Raven struggled to get loose from the fetter which prevented it's imitating it; but Elberich seized and held it securely with one hand, and stroked it into quietness with the other.

The moon had risen and was shining brightly, and the figure of the Black Dwarf was easily discernible in the elder-tree. At length approaching footsteps were heard, and the Prince and Rumpelheim appeared. At sight of them the Count could scarce restrain an exclamation of surprise, but fortunately he succeeded in controlling himself.

"Holoo! holoo! tu-wit! tu-whoo!" again cried the Black Dwarf.

"Come down, come down!" called out Rumpelheim; and the Black Dwarf obeyed the summons.

"This," said Rumpelheim, pointing to the Prince, "is the Prince Frizzoli."

"So I see," said the Black Dwarf, without even deigning to return the courteous bow of the Prince. Now why the Black Dwarf should thus respond to the introduction we know not, for he had certainly never seen the Prince before, and the fact of his expecting to see him hardly warranted this assumption of acquaintance with his visitor.

"We come," said Rumpelheim, "to carry out our part of the compact, and to claim the fulfilment of thine."

"So I supposed," said the Black Dwarf. "Show me, then, the promised reward."

Thereupon Rumpelheim produced from his vest the magnificent ruby ring and precious stones of immense value.

"Hum!" muttered the Black Dwarf, examining the ring critically, for none could estimate its value better than he.

"Art thou content?" asked the Prince.

"The stone lacks naught," replied the Black Dwarf, "save weight."

Now this was too bad, for the gem was perfect, and of extraordinary size.

"Lacks weight!" exclaimed the Prince in surprise; "why, it is the queen of rubies."

"That," said the Black Dwarf, "is matter of opinion. I have seen many finer, and the service you ask of me is none of the slightest."

"If it satisfy thee not," said the Prince, losing patience, "this at least will satisfy thee,"—taking from his finger a magnificent diamond ring, which sparkled like dew in a ray of light.

The Black Dwarf pocketed both.

"And now," said Rumpelheim, "for the promised interview with the Queen."

"How bears she her misfortune?" asked the Prince.

"Thy words are not over courteous," replied the Black Dwarf.

"Nay, the Prince meant no offence," said Rumpelheim, who feared to anger the Black Dwarf.

"That did I not," added the Prince, who was equally wishful to keep on good terms with him.

"She is indeed very lovely," said the Black Dwarf, in an admiring tone.

"Let us lose no time in going to her," said the Prince, feeling somewhat uncomfortable.

"Come along, then," said the Black Dwarf, turning to lead the way.

The three were followed at a short distance by the Count and Elberich.

"You make no doubt, I suppose," said the Black Dwarf, "that she will accept your suit in gratitude for her deliverance?"

"None," replied Rumpelheim. The Prince, however, did not feel quite so confident of this as the Lord Treasurer appeared to be, but he held his tongue, and hoped all would turn out as auspiciously as he desired.

When they came to the entrance of his abode the Black Dwarf motioned to his companions to stop.

"And now," said he, "we are near the Queen, for my dwelling is here."

The Prince's heart beat wildly in anticipation of again seeing Pimpelina, and of telling her how fondly he loved her, and how he had risked even his life to rescue her from the Black Dwarf. And Rumpelheim was greatly elated at the anticipated success of his plans, and of the honours they would secure to him at the hands of the grateful Prince.

"Shall I wait without?" asked Rumpelheim.

"Certainly," replied the Prince.

"Come along, your Highness," said the Black Dwarf, "and tell your honeyed lies to Pimpelina;" and in a moment he was invisible, for he had put on one of his little black caps, and was gone, the only signs which betokened his departure being the mocking laugh—Ha! ha! ha! which pierced the hearts of the traitorous couple, as it rang clear and distinct upon the stillness of the night.

The Prince and Rumpelheim were too much stunned to speak for awhile, and when at length they fully realised what had occurred, their hearts became stilled with terror. Ah! how they were stung with remorse,

and how bitterly they repented their wicked and treasonable designs! But it was too late. The evil had been done, and failure had left them a prey to the most agonising thoughts. And Pimpelina? Lost to them, as they believed, for ever, and doomed to die broken-hearted in the prison to which they had consigned her!

When the Prince had somewhat recovered from the stunning effects of the blow which had thus been dealt by the Black Dwarf, he heaped reproaches upon the unhappy Rumpelheim, whom he charged as being the author of his misfortune. The poor down-stricken Lord Treasurer bore them meekly enough, the only excuse he could offer being that he had been actuated by a desire to serve the Prince. The Prince, like others in similar circumstances, heeded not so reasonable an excuse, but sought to relieve his own conscience by reproaching his confederate.

All this happened in a shorter time than it has taken us to relate it, and the Prince and Rumpelheim retraced their steps to Fairy-Land—sad and dejected, as were our first parents when they

"Through Eden took their solitary way."

The duplicity of the Black Dwarf, and its effects upon the two remorse-stricken fairies, had been wit-

nessed by the Count and Elberich, neither of whom could help feeling some pity for the unhappy couple.

Elberich was aware, however, that he must lose no time in joining Siegfried, and so, requesting the Count to go in search of the carriage and to await his return, he donned the cap, and once more entered the Black Dwarf's dwelling.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RESCUE.

> "Then took he that same dwarf, and him compell'd
> To open unto him the prison door,
> And forth to bring those thralls which there he held."

ELBERICH opened the crystal doors of the Black Dwarf's abode, and then put on his Tarnkappe. He proceeded to the principal apartment, seeing, though unseen.

Pimpelina was standing by the side of Siegfried, whose left arm encircled her waist. It was clear that something exciting had occurred, for the Queen trembled visibly, whilst the Knight was boiling over with indignation. Emilia was looking on at a distance, pale with fright. The Black Dwarf was the only one of the group who appeared at all composed—indeed, he seemed to be very much amused.

"I tell thee, Dwarf," exclaimed Siegfried, "that the Queen shall quit these walls within an hour, in spite of all thy boasted power."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Black Dwarf, "'twill take a wiser head than thine to accomplish that, Sir Rhymster." This reference to the rhyme into which Siegfried had unconsciously fallen angered him greatly, but his attention was diverted by Pimpelina, who clung convulsively to his arm for protection, fearing that the Black Dwarf might seize and bear her away again beyond hope of rescue. The Knight would have dashed the wicked Dwarf to the ground, had he not somehow felt that he had no power over him.

"Thou knowest," said the Knight, "that thou art powerless as thou art false."

"And yet Pimpelina is still here," answered he, with an ugly leer.

Had not she restrained Siegfried he would certainly have given vent to his anger, for the cool familiarity of the Black Dwarf's manner and language aggravated him almost beyond endurance.

"Leave us!" at length Siegfried exclaimed, "and anger us not by thy hateful presence."

"Ha! ha! 'twould better beseem thee," said the Black Dwarf, "to beseech rather than to command. Thy passion gets the better of thy judgment, else wouldst thou deem it safer to assume a more respectful tone."

"Nay, dear Siegfried," whispered the Queen, "anger him not, for we are surely in his power."

"For thy sake," he answered, pressing her more closely to him, "I will be calm;" and he led Pimpelina to a couch, and having seated themselves, they heeded not the Black Dwarf's presence.

After a brief pause, Siegfried said, "I have but to pronounce thy name, and thou art my slave."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the Black Dwarf, rubbing his hands in great glee at the notion of any one being able to discover it. "Hearest thou that, Emilia?" The little maid remained silent, whilst Pimpelina found it difficult to control her agitation.

"Nay, look not so distressed, fair one," said the Black Dwarf, addressing himself to Pimpelina, and oggling his ugly eyes; "for thy presence is a joy and comfort to me."

"Vile apparition!" exclaimed the Knight, starting to his feet. "Thy person is but the reflex of thy wickedness; thy gnarled limbs but the expression of thy warped mind and crooked ways; thy face odious as thy debased nature! Repent whilst thou mayest, for ere long the name thou delightest in, but fearest to hear, shall echo within these walls, and thou wilt then be left alone to chew the cud of bitter regrets."

"A sweet moraliser, truly," said the Black Dwarf, clasping his hands, and lifting his gooseberry eyes in affected admiration of the Knight's speech.

"Doubt it not," continued Siegfried, his eyes flashing with anger; "for thy name is no longer a secret."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Black Dwarf, starting involuntarily at this announcement, in which he feared there might be some truth. But quickly regaining his composure, he exclaimed—"Then out with it! Why halts thy wagging tongue, brave Knight, in rescuing the fair one whom thou lovest, but who shall ne'er be thine?" and he folded his arms, and laughed mockingly at the Knight.

At this moment Elberich threw off his Tarnkappe, and released the Raven, which immediately perched on his shoulder. The Black Dwarf recoiled at the sight, and his face became livid with fear. Nor were his anticipations groundless, for Flip suddenly cried out—"The Dwarf of Llanfaicmathafarneithaf?"

"Llanfaicmathafarneithaf!" said Elberich, repeating the name.

In a moment the Black Dwarf fell upon his knees, his whole body quivering with emotion, and covering his face with his hands exclaimed—"Spare me! spare me!"

"Holoo! holoo! tu-wit! tu-whoo!" cried Flip.

"Listen," said Elberich, addressing himself to the stooping figure before him. "Thou art now my slave, and we shall soon quit this place for ever. But, before we do so, there are some things I require of thee. Thou decoyedst Emilia from her parents by false promises, and they have mourned her loss these many years. She has been thy servant—has cooked thy meals, and done thy bidding. To her, ample recompense must be made. Hearest thou?"

The Black Dwarf bent his head in token of assent, and Elberich then continued: "She must quit this place for ever."

"Not so, not so!" exclaimed the Black Dwarf, starting to his feet.

Elberich heeded not the interruption, but continued: "Emilia shall be restored to her parents; and her future comfort provided for out of thy ill-gotten wealth. Bring forth the finest of thy jewels—the brightest of thy gems—for with these shalt thou make amends for the sufferings she and her parents have undergone at thy hands."

Emilia heard these words with astonishment, and was scarcely able to realise the happiness that was in store for her. Pimpelina's face beamed with joy.

"Did I not tell thee," she whispered, "that Elberich would perform his promise?"

Flip flapped its wings, and, being unwilling to let the others have all the talking to themselves, cried out—

> "The fox got trapped one night in the dark,
> As he stole a fat hen, just by way of a lark."

The Black Dwarf took a step forward, as if with the intent of screwing the bird's neck round, but his advance was stayed by Elberich.

"Before leaving to collect the treasures I spoke of," said he to the Black Dwarf, "I will trouble thee for the diamond and ruby rings which the Prince Frizzoli gave thee this night."

Pimpelina and the Knight were amazed at this speech, whilst the Black Dwarf's eyes opened wider than ever, for he was utterly at a loss to understand how Elberich knew of his interview with the Prince and Rumpelheim.

"Nay, look not so astonished; for the ruby is on thy finger, and the diamond is in thy fob," said Elberich.

This must have tickled Flip's ears, for it immediately repeated the words—"The ruby is on thy finger, and the diamond is in thy fob;" and then, as if conscious

of a good opening for a rhyme, it added, "Stupid Bob! stupid Bob!"

This greatly amused all except the Black Dwarf, who with difficulty restrained himself from giving vent to the passion that made him yearn to stifle the life out of the bird that had betrayed his secret.

"And now," said Elberich, "go and obey my commands; and remember that if thou bringest not as many of thy finest gems as Emilia and I can carry, and as much gold as will fill thy waggon, it shall go hard with thee."

The Black Dwarf quitted the apartment in despair, for to part with his riches was to part with what he prized most—he, like all his race, being avaricious to a degree.

"And now," said the Queen, after the withdrawal of the Black Dwarf, "pray explain this mystery about the Prince's ring. How came the Black Dwarf by it?"

"That," said the Dwarf, "shall be explained to your Majesty; but I pray you let the matter rest until the Prince shall have an opportunity of hearing and answering a charge deeply affecting his honour and loyalty."

Pimpelina was of course unable to understand what Elberich referred to, but his language was sufficiently explicit to inform her of the gravity of the accusation

against her cousin, and, though her anxiety to learn its nature was great, she acquiesced in the course suggested, satisfied that the present was not a fitting occasion for prosecuting her inquiries.

As to Emilia, she was wild with joyous excitement. She ran from one apartment to another; clapped her hands at the mechanical songsters as if they were real birds able to sympathise with her happiness; looked into all sorts of corners, as if to say good-bye to everything; and almost broke her glass slippers by the rapidity of her movements. Once she caught sight of the Black Dwarf, who was groaning over a huge box containing his treasures, and from which he was taking stones of untold value. We need scarcely say she ran away again as quickly as her feet could carry her, for the agony he suffered at having to part with his riches made his face uglier than ever.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "had I that hateful Flip in these hands, I would tear it limb from limb. Bah! I was a fool to let it escape. Why did I not wring its accursed neck?" Then resuming his work, he continued to take out diamonds and rubies, and other gems, often hesitating, as if in doubt whether he should not restore one or other of them to the box; but he feared lest his cupidity should exasperate Elberich into

requiring still greater sacrifices of him; and so, with many sighs and groans, he filled a bag with the largest and most brilliant of his gems. When he had done this, he went into his workshop, and returning with a waggon of exquisite design, drew it into a secret chamber full of ingots of gold. Sadly and slowly he piled them into the waggon.

"Haste thee!" a voice exclaimed from the adjoining apartment.

The Black Dwarf ground his teeth in impotent rage, for he knew that he was in the power of Elberich. So he placed the bag on the gold, and stifled his feelings as best he could, groaning under the weight of the waggon which he drew after him.

When Elberich saw the loaded waggon, and had examined the contents of the bag, he complimented the Black Dwarf on his generosity, whereupon the latter begged to have a part returned to him.

"What sayest thou, Flip?" asked Elberich.

> "'At fools, stu-pid fools, I always laugh,'
> Said the Dwarf of Llanfaicmathafarneithaf,"

replied the Raven.

Pimpelina and the others laughed heartily at this response, and Elberich told the Black Dwarf that after

this answer he could not think of returning any portion of the treasure.

"But who will draw the waggon?" asked Emilia.

"The Black Dwarf, of course," replied Elberich.

The Black Dwarf groaned at this intimation of the labour that was expected of him.

"Nay, nay," said the Knight; "the burden would be grievous, so have compassion on him."

This plea was supported by Pimpelina, whereupon Elberich inquired how it was to be conveyed to Emilia's home.

"Unharness one of the horses from the carriage," replied Siegfried, "and put it into the waggon shafts."

Emilia clapped her hands at this suggestion, which met with general approval.

"Come along," said Elberich; "but stay, there is one other favour we must ask of thee. Go, fetch two suits of mail of thy finest workmanship."

The Black Dwarf left the room and returned with them.

"I thank thee," said Elberich; "but where are the swords?"

"None were mentioned," replied the Black Dwarf.

"Tut! tut! of what avail's the one without the

other? We flatter thy skill by seeking to possess these proofs of it."

The Black Dwarf, being helpless to resist these commands, fetched the required weapons, and handed them to Elberich, who presented one of them to the Knight, and put the other in his own belt."

Siegfried marvelled at their beauty, and, as he bent the one given to him, praised its temper.

"And now, Llanfaic-air——" said Elberich, who had already forgotten the Black Dwarf's name.

"Llanfaicmathafarneithaf," said Flip.

"I thank thee, Flip," said Elberich, "for jogging my memory." Then, pointing to the waggon, he commanded the Black Dwarf to lead the way. He did so, followed by Elberich and Emilia—Pimpelina and the Knight coming last.

Elberich had the sense to precede them, guessing that, lover-like, they would prefer to come last, in order that they might indulge, unseen, in those little attentions so dear to wooers.

They found the Count waiting outside for them, and close by was the Queen's carriage, drawn by the three black palfreys we have seen before. The leading horse was soon harnessed to the waggon; and Pimpelina, Siegfried, and the Count, having taking their

places in the carriage, the coachman cracked his whip, and they were soon on their way to Fairy-Land.

"And now, Emilia," said Elberich, when the others were gone, "jump on, and let us be off."

Emilia did so, and, when Elberich was ready to start, she called out "Good-bye" to the Black Dwarf. Elberich had no whip to crack, but he shook the reins, and as the horse started he threw the little black cap at the Black Dwarf, and Flip at the same moment nodded adieu to its former master. No sooner had Elberich flung the cap at the Black Dwarf than he became invisible, and returned to his abode, a prey to bitter feelings.

CHAPTER XVII.

EMILIA'S HOME.

"At length her lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree."

OH how happy Emilia felt as she and the Dwarf drove through the forest and over the uplands towards her home! The moon was still visible in the heavens, but the dawn was rapidly approaching, and brought into greater relief the trees and shrubs and flowers. Now and again a squirrel was disturbed by their advance, and made for the higher branches of the trees with all haste. Emilia clapped her hands to hasten still more their escape; whilst Flip looked gravely upon these signs of youthful frolic, as if he regarded them as the foolish but pardonable weaknesses of youth. Though Flip was sleek, it was of great age,—at least so one would judge from its proficiency in speech, and its air of wisdom. Of course Elberich did not know

how old Flip was, and one cannot easily guess the age of a raven.

Had Emilia paid any attention to Flip she would have been greatly amused, as was the Dwarf, with its behaviour. It rested occasionally on one leg, and closed its eyes in meditation; and when Emilia laughed at some remark made by Elberich it yawned undisguisedly, which was certainly very ill-mannered of it.

"Come Flip, wake up," said Elberich, when he caught it yawning. Flip, however, took no notice of the remark.

"Dear Flip," said Emilia, stroking its feathers tenderly, "how much I am indebted to thee for my present happiness!" And after a short pause she added, "How could he remember the Black Dwarf's name? I had tried hundreds of times to make it out, but it was no use, and I should never have been able to do so. But dear Flip out with it in a moment, and without even a stutter. How did he manage to learn it, I wonder?"

"I hardly know," said Elberich; "but you, I suppose, only heard the Black Dwarf hum it indistinctly, as I did, and I'm sure I should never have learnt it in that way. Come, Flip," he added, "cheer up and say something."

But for a while the Raven heeded not these calls. At length, however, it favoured them with a couplet, and then relapsed into silence—

"Tu-whit, tu-whoo!
What a halliballoo!"

"Oh, you queer old Flip," exclaimed Emilia, looking at the raven admiringly, and again stroking its black smooth feathers.

"There was a little maiden,
Who was fond of a raven,"

cried Flip, as if pleased with these kind attentions.

"He is quite a poet, isn't he?" asked Emilia.

"Indeed he is," said Elberich.

"A poet, a poet:
Go it; go it!"

returned Flip, who seemed to have an incurable fondness for rhyme.

"Steady!" exclaimed the Dwarf, as they were making a turn in the path, and were almost upset, for the waggon required skill and care to guide it safely.

Then Emilia fell into thinking of all that had happened during the last few hours, and of the beautiful Fairy Queen, who had shown her so much kindness and sympathy.

"Will the Queen marry the handsome fairy?" she inquired of Elberich.

"I don't know; for that depends upon many circumstances."

"But I'm sure they love each other very, very much," said Emilia; "so why shouldn't they?"

"Perhaps they will, but I cannot tell," said the Dwarf.

"How grateful she must be to you for having got her away from the wicked Black Dwarf," said Emilia.

"The Knight is my master," said Elberich; "and so I was in duty bound to do all I could for them both."

"Ah! but it was kindness and not duty that led you to help them, wasn't it?" she asked.

"I need not serve, did I not love him," answered Elberich; "and the Queen is not more lovely than she is gracious."

"And kindness begets love, and so I love you ever so much," said Emilia, "for all your kindness to me. And my parents will be grateful to you all their lives," and tears moistened her eyes.

"Whoo! whoo!" exclaimed Flip, whereupon the frisky little horse pulled up suddenly, to the danger of the occupants of the waggon, the Raven included. Elberich pretended to be angry with Flip for thus

interfering with his driving and endangering their seats; but Flip closed its eyes in utter disregard, and contented itself with hopping to the other shoulder.

"You must show me the way to your home," said Elberich to Emilia, when they had proceeded a considerable distance.

"Oh! we are all right," said she, "and shall soon be there."

As they drove along she pointed out to the Dwarf the places she knew so well,—mossy banks where she had often roamed,—distant mountains which heard the music of the flowing Rhine,—castles where dwelt powerful nobles, of whom she spoke with almost breathless awe. Elberich was charmed with her prattle, for his heart rejoiced at having been the means of restoring her to happiness.

"There it is!" at length exclaimed Emilia, pointing excitedly to a small cottage not far distant. "Now turn to the right, and we shall be there directly." And so they were; and when they reached the door Emilia sprang out of the waggon, rushed to the door, and knocked as loudly as she could, for it was only four o'clock, and the inmates were, of course, still in bed. In a short time a voice inquired from the chamber above, who was there, and then a head appeared.

"It's me, father; it's me!" exclaimed Emilia joyfully, forgetful of grammar.

"Emilia! Emilia!" exclaimed her father, who immediately disappeared, and was quickly succeeded by a female, who popped her head out of the window to see with her own eyes that her old man had not lost his senses. But the moment she saw her daughter she stretched forth her arms as though she would clasp Emilia to her even at that distance.

You may be sure they were not long in dressing themselves and opening the door. And who shall describe the joyful embraces with which they welcomed their long-lost daughter! How they pressed her to their hearts time after time, and showered kisses upon her, whilst tears of gladness coursed down their cheeks! It was indeed a touching sight, and the Dwarf looked on with a joy almost equal to their own. When at length they had relieved their feelings, they were surprised beyond measure at seeing the waggon and its occupant.

"Who's that?" asked Emilia's father.

"My benefactor," said she; and turning to Elberich she invited him to alight.

Elberich was by no means loath to do so, for the waggon was anything but a comfortable car-

riage, and short though his legs were they felt rather crampy.

Having speedily alighted, he bowed to Emilia's parents, who followed his example, and when Elberich repeated this ceremony they did the same, to the amusement of Emilia, who burst into a merry laugh, which completely disconcerted them.

"Why are you scraping and bowing like dancing masters?" she asked, as soon as she had recovered her gravity. "This"—pointing to the Dwarf—"is my benefactor and true knight-errant, for he has rescued me from the Black Dwarf."

On hearing this, Emilia's father seized Elberich's hand, and wrung it heartily; but the words of thanks clung to his lips—stayed in their course by feelings which completely overcame him. Elberich was deeply moved by this evidence of the old man's gratitude, and an awkward silence would have intervened had not Flip cried out—

"There once was a monk
Who got very drunk."

This irreverent remark on the part of Flip—who was perched on the Dwarf's shoulder—made Emilia's parents start not only with astonishment, but awe. Her mother, indeed, crossed herself, as if to guard her-

self against the influence of an evil spirit. Emilia, however, had by this time become accustomed to Flip's vagaries, and laughed at this display of his talent.

"You need not be shocked at Flip," she said to her mother, "for it is a dear old bird. But," she added, "I will tell you all about it when I have time, and then you will love Flip as much as I do."

Elberich was at length invited into the house, and to partake of breakfast; but before doing so, he took the beautiful little horse out of the shafts of the waggon, and lodged it comfortably in the mistal, there being no stable on the premises.

Having thus looked after the animal's comfort, he joined Emilia and her parents, and partook of the homely fare they placed before him. Emilia waxed eloquent in praise of his goodness, and it was with difficulty that he restrained the expressions of her gratitude for all his kindness.

The cottage contained only one room on the ground floor, which served both as kitchen and parlour. In this they breakfasted, and very cheery the place looked, for a log fire was by this time spurting sparks across the hearth. Though the repast consisted only of milk, fried bacon, and black bread, they relished it greatly, their appetites being sharpened by the best of all

sauces—hunger. The old couple could not, however, help looking at the Dwarf with curious eyes, for they had never before seen so strange a being. Elberich, though conscious of their scrutinising glances, heeded them not, but kept up the conversation as best he could. Truly the table presented a novel sight. Opposite each other sat Emilia's parents, whilst she and Elberich faced each other. Though Emilia was only thirteen years old, she was very tall in comparison with the Dwarf, who, in order to place himself on a level with the table, had to seat himself in Emilia's baby-chair.

Elberich, who had been mindful of his steed, was not forgetful of Flip, and many were the pieces of bread he threw to it during breakfast. These it seized with avidity, vouchsafing a remark only occasionally.

"Come, Flip," said Emilia, throwing him a tit-bit. "wake up, and show that you can be as merry as the rest of us."

The Raven took the morsel without returning thanks, whereupon the Dwarf called out, "Llan-faic-faic——"

"Llanfaicmathafarneithaf!" cried Flip.

"Goodness me," said Emilia's mother with astonishment, "what can the bird mean?"

"Ah! that you shall know presently," said Emilia, throwing another morsel to Flip. This it seized and devoured with the utmost gravity and composure, and having done so, gravely remarked—

> "The fox got trapped one night in the dark,
> As he stole a fat hen, by way of a lark."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Emilia's father, who, though not a very entertaining companion at a meal, could enjoy a speech which appealed to his own experiences as a farmer. "And so Master Reynard got the worst of it, did he?" and he laughed again right heartily. Flip, however, declined to be dragged into conversation, and instead of answering the question, looked askance at the old man as if in surprise at his hilarity.

At length Elberich arose, or rather descended, from his chair, saying that he must leave them. Before doing so, however, he reminded Emilia of the treasures which were in the waggon, and which he desired her to store in some place of safety; and the astonishment of the aged couple when they saw the gold and jewels was unbounded. Their joy at possessing so much wealth was mingled with fear: but Elberich reassured them, saying that if it was wisely used all would go well with them.

The small black steed was again harnessed to the waggon, and Elberich seized the reins, and stepped into it with Flip on his shoulder.

"Are you really going?" asked Emilia, with tearful eyes.

"Yes, I must leave you; but you may be sure I shall not forget my little Emilia," said Elberich.

The old people seemed amused at a tiny fellow like Elberich calling any one *little.*

"Well, then, good-bye!" cried Emilia. "But stay while I fetch you a buffet to sit on," and she ran into the cottage and returned with a small wooden stool, which she placed in the waggon. Elberich seated himself upon it, and having again bade Emilia and her parents good-bye, drove away, his vanishing figure being watched by them until it was out of sight.

"Dear, good Elberich!" exclaimed Emilia, the tears streaming down her face—for she was very grateful—as he vanished in the distance.

Emilia grew not only in stature but in goodness, and made kindly use of the riches she had acquired in so remarkable a manner. In course of time she married one who prized her more for her good qualities than her wealth, and was as happy as the days were long. She purchased the estate on which her father's cottage

stood, and built a church at her own expense, in gratitude to God for the blessings He had showered upon her. And never did she forget the Dwarf, but treasured him in her memory as her kind benefactor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FAIRY QUEEN'S RETURN.

"Treason is there in its most horrid shape,
Where trust is greatest."

NEVER were a people so rejoiced as were Pimpelina's subjects at her return to Fairy-Land. Their joy was unbounded, for they loved her for her beauty and goodness, and her loss had been a sad blow to them. She was welcomed with sweet music—music softer and sweeter than any heard on bridal-morn, for the harebells shook their bonny heads, and pealed forth sounds which only fairies can hear. But *they* could hear the music, and knew it was in honour of their Queen's return. Ding, dong! ding, dong! ding, dong! Oh, how sweetly it sounded in their ears as they danced in merry mood upon the green-sward of the beautiful Fairy-Land! One of the fairies composed this song in honour of the occasion :—

The harebells are merry to-night;
With music they fill the sweet air,
And with peal upon peal delight
To keep time for the dancing fair.

And the daisies and buttercups bend
To whisper each other, so sweet;
While the grasshoppers chirrup and lend
New life to the hurrying feet.

The nightingale trills aloft;
The thrush is singing in tune—
And their notes so clear and soft
Ascend to the waning moon.

The hum of small voices is heard
At a distance, then dies away;
Till no song is heard
But that of the bird
That welcomes th' approaching day.
But the harebells cease not their peals of delight
Till they hear the soft echo—Good night! good night!

The fairies were loud in their praises of Siegfried, whom they regarded as Pimpelina's knight-errant, for the means of her rescue were not yet fully known. And what of the Prince and Rumpelheim? In truth, none rejoiced more than they at the Queen's return, for their hearts had been burdened with remorse at the calamity which had, as they believed, befallen her

through their plottings with the Black Dwarf. But though their surmises had happily not been verified, their guilty consciences forbade their seeking Pimpelina, and joining in the congratulations which others hastened to offer her. Their absence surprised the Queen, though she had hardly time to dwell upon it, amid the bustle and excitement of her return. She was still ignorant of the part they had taken in her abduction, for the Count had deemed it prudent to keep his own counsel as to what had occurred between them and the Black Dwarf, until Elberich's return.

* * * * *

On the following night the fairies thronged to the green-sward where we first saw them, to dance their ringlets to the whistling wind, and to enjoy themselves as only fairies can. Even the demure Sophietta joined in the festive circle, and forgot for a while her imagined superiority over the giddy and thoughtless ones. Pimpelina and Siegfried were there, happy in the love that had found a voice in the Black Dwarf's dwelling.

But though many of the fairies guessed shrewdly as to how matters stood between the two, nothing official was known, and they were therefore left to content themselves with surmises.

"See how they beam upon each other," whispered

Mametta to the Count, as they walked apart from the rest.

"And yet," said the Count, "I envy them not; for that which gives them happiness is ours also—Love!"

Mametta's eyes drooped with maidenly bashfulness, though her heart beat with happiness, for she and the Count were lovers, and his words were very sweet to her.

Others, untrammelled by Cupid's fetters, also passed remarks upon Pimpelina and the Knight. These considered themselves free lances—at liberty to strike whom and how they pleased.

"Ah, ah!" laughed one, who was dressed in the height of fashion and whose tresses were garlanded with a band of forget-me-nots: "The Queen doth dream of joy which ends with waking."

"Then must thine have ceased long ago," said her companion in the dance, "for a livelier fairy none e'er knew."

"And yet she hopes to dream again," said Sophietta, who had overheard them.

"As others do," replied the first fairy.

"Well, well," sighed Sophietta.

"Nay, do not despair, for it is a long lane that has no ending."

So you see that even fairies crack their jokes at each other's expense, and especially when the victims are prim, and affect airs of wisdom.

But hark! the trumpet sounds, blown by a sturdy grasshopper whose eyes protruded from its head with the exertion.

"What meaneth this?" asked Sophietta of her companion.

"That shall we shortly learn," answered he; "so let us hasten to the Queen's tent."

The fairies soon surrounded Pimpelina and her court, and waited impatiently to learn the cause of the summons. The Queen did not keep them long in suspense; but in a clear voice announced her betrothal to the Knight. The announcement was received with acclamation by the fairies. As soon as silence was restored, Pimpelina said: "And now, in accordance with the custom of our race, I ask if any of my subjects can allege ought against my choice of a consort?"

Not a voice was raised in answer to this challenge; but the Fairy Prince stepped forward and offered his congratulations.

"I thank thee, cousin," said Pimpelina, "for thy kindness."

"Stay," exclaimed the Dwarf, making his way through the crowd as quickly as he could.

"What means this?" asked the Queen of Siegfried, seeing that it was Elberich who was advancing.

"Indeed I know not. Explain thyself, Elberich."

"That I will, and right quickly," said the Dwarf, upon whose shoulder Flip was perched in solemn silence.

"The Prince, your royal cousin," said Elberich, "hath tendered his congratulations on your betrothal with my master?"

"Well?" said the Queen.

"Know, then, that I charge him with treasonable conspiracy against your person and liberty."

"Thou'rt mad, Elberich," said the Knight.

"Seem I so?" asked the Dwarf, who felt hurt by the remark.

"Then explain," said Siegfried.

"The Prince," said the Dwarf, "has heard my charge; what saith he—guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty!" exclaimed Rumpelheim, advancing to the side of the Prince, and casting a look of disdain upon the Dwarf.

"What! requires he an advocate?" asked Elberich; "and such a one!"

The Prince remained silent, for he knew too well

the truth of the accusation made against him, though he guessed not how his treason had been discovered.

"Your Majesty will scarce deign to hearken to the ravings of this fellow," said Rumpelheim.

"You forget," said the Knight indignantly, "that he to whom you apply so base an epithet is my servant and friend."

"I meant no insult to you, Sir Knight," said Rumpelheim; "but when the Prince is charged thus glibly with treason, soft words were but ill suited to the occasion."

"True, Herr Rumpelheim," said the Dwarf; "and I'll cull my words from thy vocabulary. Again I charge the Prince, and thee, Herr Rumpelheim, with treason — ay, treason most base — against your Queen!"

"Hold!" exclaimed Pimpelina, in a calm and firm voice. "This is a matter of too grave import for hasty decision. Let the Prince, Herr Rumpelheim, and Elberich attend us in our palace at the next rising of the moon. Till then we hold our judgment in suspense. I would not, however, that this matter damp our subjects' revelry;" and wishing to set them the example, she said to Siegfried, "I claim your hand for the dance, Sir Knight," and away they whirled in the myst-

maze,—dancing, as only fairies can dance, to the music of the Grasshoppers.

And certainly, to judge from the way in which the fairies tripped it on the light fantastic toe, the strange event had not damped their pleasure.

When at length the dance was over, Pimpelina walked aside with the Knight, and inquired what he knew concerning the serious charge alleged against the Prince and Rumpelheim.

"Indeed I am totally ignorant of the matter, Pimpelina," he replied, "and cannot guess to what Elberich alluded; and the strangest fact is, that he should never have even hinted at it to me. But although I am as much perplexed as thou art, dearest, I know Elberich too well to believe him capable of making a false charge against any one. Nevertheless, let us banish all thoughts of what has occurred until the Prince and Herr Rumpelheim shall have an opportunity of explaining what, after all, may only be a misapprehension on Elberich's part."

"I trust it may be so, dearest Siegfried," said Pimpelina, who was much distressed at the event.

Nor did the other fairies fail to express to each other their astonishment at the Dwarf's accusation, or to make all sorts of surmises as to what it could all

mean. The sympathies of the great majority of them were with the Prince and Rumpelheim; for fairies, like others, are apt to side with the unfortunate, even though their misfortunes have resulted from their own errors. Besides, were not the Prince and the Lord Treasurer of their own kith and kin, whilst the Dwarf had, until a few nights ago, been unknown to them? And why, then, should he take upon himself to make so serious a charge against them? And was not one the cousin of the Queen? and yet, forsooth, this uncouth-looking Dwarf should have the temerity—the impudence—to call in question the loyalty of a Prince of the royal blood! Such were the remarks made by many of the fairies as they danced and strolled on the green-sward by the light of the waning moon.

Meanwhile, the Prince and Rumpelheim had wandered to a considerable distance from the throng, and were engaged in anxious conference.

"I tell thee, Rumpelheim," said the Prince, "that our treason is discovered, or the Dwarf would not have dared to aver it so publicly."

"It may—nay, it must—be a mere surmise on his part; for how can he have discovered our plot?"

"He is too wary to launch a charge of so serious a nature, had he not proofs which we cannot gainsay."

"What, then, is to be done?" asked Rumpelheim.

"I know not," answered the Prince; "but I have a mind to confess my guilt, and to throw myself upon the Queen's clemency."

"And ruin yourself for ever," said Rumpelheim. "Such, however, is not my intention, but rather to meet the charge with a stout denial, and urge him to the proof; for e'en if he have o'erheard ought of our conversations this serves but for suspicion, and provides him not with the necessary proof of our guilt."

"It is useless to deceive ourselves, Rumpelheim," said the Prince; "and our denial will only aggravate our offence."

"But how will it avail us to make confession?"

"Indeed I cannot tell," replied the Prince; "but it will at least keep our consciences free from further stain. And even could we, by false and hated lies, escape the punishment we merit, what consolation would that be? Would not our consciences be a very burden to us, and our unmerited acquittal a source of lifelong reproach to both?"

"Then are we undone," said Rumpelheim, despairingly; for he liked not the Prince's mood, and yet dared not press him further to brave the worst.

"Nay, though I will satisfy my own conscience in

this matter," said the Prince, "I will not betray thee, Rumpelheim, but rather take the guilt of both upon myself."

This touched the heart of the Lord Treasurer, who, though averse to confessing his guilt, was not base enough to let the Prince alone bear the punishment.

The Count, who of course knew that the Prince and Rumpelheim were guilty—having been present at their interview with the Black Dwarf—thought it prudent to avoid conversing with the Knight, lest he should betray the secret he shared with Elberich, which he did not wish to do for the present. He therefore occupied himself with Mametta, in conversing with whom he avoided all reference to what had transpired, and she, on her part, was too happy in his attentions to render this very difficult. So the night passed, and at length the band of fairies tripped lightly homewards before the advancing morn had tipped the neighbouring hills with its roseate hues.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PLOT REVEALED.

"—— it shall scarce boot me
To say, *Not guilty.*"

NEXT night the Queen's palace was crowded with fairies anxious to witness the important event. Their tongues were very busy with surmises, for nothing had transpired to acquaint them with the nature of the treason charged against the Prince and Rumpelheim. Never had such an accusation been made before, and their hearts beat with excitement in anticipation of what they were about to learn. Their sympathies were, as we have said, with the Prince and Lord Treasurer, whom they hoped to see cleared of the charge which the Dwarf had brought against them. Not that they disliked Elberich, for until this accusation had been made by him he was a great favourite with all the fairies, whom he had amused with his whimsical drolleries. They hoped that somehow the

affair would end without discredit to any of the parties involved in it, though how this could be they failed to guess.

At length Pimpelina, accompanied by the Knight, Count, Mametta, and others of her court, took her seat on the dais at one end of the noble room in which the fairies were assembled, and immediately the hum of voices ceased, and every ear was bent to catch the Queen's words:

"Let the Prince, the Lord Treasurer, and Elberich advance." They did so, and made their obeisance. Pimpelina commanded them to be seated, and then in a voice tremulous with feeling said: "We are met to take into our serious and anxious consideration certain grave accusations against the loyalty of our cousin and trusted Treasurer. Of the particulars of the offence charged against them we are ignorant, and we therefore command that it shall be publicly stated and met."

The excitement became intense when Elberich stepped forward, accompanied by Flip, which stood calm and collected on his right shoulder.

"May it please your Majesty," said Elberich, in clear and distinct tones, "I am here to charge His Royal Highness the Prince Frizzoli, and Herr Rumpel-

heim, your Majesty's Lord Treasurer, with treason against your Majesty's royal person."

A scarcely suppressed buzz ran through the room at this speech, but in a moment all was quiet as before.

"I charge them," continued the Dwarf, "with having entered into a treasonable conspiracy with the Black Dwarf, in pursuance of which your Majesty was abducted and conveyed to his abode." Then turning to the Prince and Rumpelheim, he said, "I now ask whether the charge is true or false?"

"False!" exclaimed Rumpelheim.

"The Prince answers not," said the Dwarf, eyeing him calmly; but the Prince answered not.

"What proof have we of their guilt?" asked the Queen.

"This!" replied Elberich, holding up the diamond and ruby rings which the Prince had given to the Black Dwarf.

"Thou hast stolen them," shouted Rumpelheim.

"The charge being thus denied, I must relate the whole history of this treasonable conspiracy. I heard," he continued, "the plot concocted between the Prince and the Lord Treasurer, and it was this:—Herr Rumpelheim suggested that he should seek an interview with the Black Dwarf, who was to be prevailed upon to

abduct the Queen, and afterwards to allow of her pretended rescue by the Prince. The interview took place, and the Black Dwarf promised the required service. The Queen, by an arrangement of the Lord Treasurer, drove to the forest the following night, and was seized by the Black Dwarf and borne to his dwelling. None but the coachman, and one of the ladies-in-waiting—save myself—accompanied your Majesty. Two nights afterwards the Prince and Rumpelheim, as previously arranged, had an interview with the Black Dwarf, who received as a reward for his services these magnificent rings. Having, however, become possessed of these, the Black Dwarf failed to carry out the remaining part of his compact—to lead the Prince to his abode, and allow him to restore the Queen to her subjects. Having, as I said, got possession of these valuables, the Black Dwarf put on his little black cap and became invisible, and left the Prince and Herr Rumpelheim preys to vain regrets. I was present at this interview also, and witnessed what I have related. Your Majesty knows that you owed your freedom to the Knight; and I challenge those whom I have charged to deny the truth of what I have spoken."

Flip nodded his head as if he understood and could verify every word that had fallen from Elberich.

Rumpelheim sprang to his feet, and in an angry and husky voice thus replied to the charge:

"That the base accusation made against the Prince and myself is unworthy of belief is apparent upon the face of it, for it is not only incredible in itself, but is even glaringly irreconcilable with facts known to all. The Dwarf states that he overheard a conversation between the Prince and myself. If he did, he was guilty of eavesdropping—an offence to which, happily, we are not prone. Then he further states that he accompanied her Majesty in her drive on the night of her disappearance. This can be shown to be untrue by the evidence of the lady-in-waiting, Mametta, and the coachman. He further alleges that he saw the Prince give the rings to the Black Dwarf. How, then, came they into *his* possession? Moreover, the Queen was rescued by the Knight, and not by the Prince. How happened this? Surely, if the plot said to have been entered into between the Black Dwarf and myself ever existed, he would have carried out his part of the compact rather than have allowed your Majesty to be rescued by other than the Prince. In truth, I never saw the Black Dwarf, much less plotted with him, or became his dupe. This is surely sufficient to free the Prince and myself from the base accusation made against us, and

which I fling back into the teeth of the wretch who made it."

When Rumpelheim sat down, a loud murmur of applause ran through the excited audience, who were deeply impressed with his reply, which they considered to be conclusive of the innocence of himself and the Prince. They were, however, somewhat surprised at the Prince's silence, but attributed this to his indignation at being made the object of such a charge. Silence was quickly restored when Pimpelina rose, and said: "I can certainly confirm the Lord Treasurer's statement that the only occupants of the carriage on the night in question were myself, the ladies-in-waiting, and the coachman. This fact, therefore, calls for explanation on the part of Elberich."

"Your Majesty is correct in supposing that—so far as any one knew—none but the three named accompanied your Majesty in your drive. I, however, occupied a seat on the box, though unknown even to the coachman himself."

This statement, seemingly so utterly absurd, was received by the fairies with mocking laughter.

"This seems to cause not only surprise, but merriment," continued the Dwarf; "but I can easily show that what I assert is not incompatible with truth."

Then holding up his Tarnkappe, he said, "You see this cloak? well, this is my Tarnkappe, which has the property of making its wearer invisible, as you will discover in a moment." He then threw it over him, and lo! he disappeared. Loud exclamations of wonder ran through the chamber at this extraordinary display, but in a few moments the Dwarf threw off the mantle and became once more visible. "This, then, will have disposed of that part of the Lord Treasurer's defence. And as to his positive denial of his interview with the Black Dwarf, there is one here who can vouch for the truth of what I have stated, for he saw the Prince give the rings to the Black Dwarf."

"Elberich speaks truth!" exclaimed the Count, rising; "for I was present, and heard and saw what transpired."

This corroboration of the Dwarf's story produced a visible effect upon the audience, whose faith in the innocence of the Prince and Rumpelheim became greatly shaken.

"As regards the rescue by the Knight, that was effected, not by arrangement with, but in spite of, the Black Dwarf. This, as well as the fact of my having received the rings from him, your Majesty can vouch," said Elberich.

"That was so," said Pimpelina, rising, "but I am at a loss to understand the motive for the treason charged against the Prince and the Lord Treasurer."

"That," said the Fairy Prince, advancing to the throne, and prostrating himself before the Queen, "I will explain. The charge made against me is, alas! too true; and though I can offer no excuse for my offence, I pray your Majesty to accept as some palliation of it the passion which urged me to what I now deplore. I loved your Majesty! That love had grown with years, and I was angered at seeing the heart I had hoped was mine given, as I too truly believed, to another. My defeat in the tourney added fuel to the fire which already consumed me, and I was ready to adopt any means whereby I might win back the love I had once hoped was mine. 'Twas this that blinded me to the folly and wickedness of the plot which has been revealed. But though I am guilty of the treason alleged, I vow my innocence of any thought of ultimate harm to your Majesty. Your rescue was to be accomplished by me, and I hoped thereby to win the gratitude that is akin to love. I was duped by the Black Dwarf, and returned in sorrow and remorse. I have spoken truth, and submit myself to the punishment which my offence hath so well merited."

Tears filled every eye except that of the Lord Treasurer, who looked pale and scared at the Prince's confession.

Pimpelina, who too was visibly affected, commanded the Prince to rise, and when he had risen to his feet the Knight approached him and grasped his hand, which he pressed with emotion. The Prince understood, and was deeply moved by, the generosity of his rival. Nor did the incident fail to touch the heart of the Queen, or to call forth an outburst of applause from the fairies.

When silence was restored, the Queen arose, and fixing her beautiful eyes—which at that moment were fired with anger—upon Rumpelheim, inquired if he had anything to urge in extenuation of his double offence; for, by denying the charge and attempting to throw suspicion upon the Dwarf, he had been guilty of a crime even baser than that of treason.

Rumpelheim bowed his knee before the throne, and urged in extenuation of his guilt that he had been actuated solely by a desire to secure the happiness of her Majesty and her royal cousin, as well as the welfare of her subjects. When he had concluded, the Queen commanded him to resume his seat. Then rising from her throne, Pimpelina said: "We have heard,

not without painful emotions, the confessions which have been made of treasonable conspiracy against our royal person—treason which is alleged to have sprung from a regard to our own happiness and the welfare of our subjects. I prefer not to judge of the motives of others, but rather to leave you to apportion the guilt, and award the punishment of the Prince, our royal cousin, and the Lord Treasurer. It is the custom of our race to banish those who plot against our crown, but it is our royal wish to ask the advice of our subjects before awarding this terrible punishment. How then say you?"

There was a momentary pause, and then Siegfried advanced to the throne and pleaded earnestly that the Prince and Herr Rumpelheim might be pardoned. As Pimpelina heard the Knight urge all that could be advanced in favour of his former rival, her heart beat with pride at the generosity shown by her future consort; but it hardly required any words to move her tender heart to pity and forgiveness towards her guilty cousin. But she could not look so leniently upon Herr Rumpelheim's offence, being aggravated, as it was, by his denial of the accusation.

The pleading of the Knight was not less successful with the other fairies, who signified their approval by

the most hearty demonstrations. The result was, that the Prince received a full pardon, but Rumpelheim was sentenced to temporary solitude.

Whilst all this was taking place Flip behaved with commendable dignity; but no sooner were the proceedings over than he startled the audience by crying—

> "At fools, stu-pid fools, I always laugh,
> Said the Dwarf of Llanfaicmathafarneithaf."

The fairies looked at the bird in astonishment, as well they might. Elberich stroked Flip fondly, and recounted the part he had had in the rescue of the Queen. When the audience had thus become aware of Flip's services, their delight was unbounded, and Elberich, for their amusement, urged it to give further exhibitions of its talent, which Flip did, to the great delight of the fairies.

And thus the great event came to an end, and the result of the proceedings was to fill the mind of the Prince with gratitude to the Knight who had exhibited towards him the true spirit of chivalry.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FAIRY QUEEN'S WEDDING—THE AWAKENING.

> "Then came the bride, . . .
> Clad in a vesture of unknown gear
> And uncouth fashion, yet her well became,
> That seem'd like silver sprinkled here and there
> With glittering spangs that did like stars appear."

IN Fairy-Land, as elsewhere, a queen's wedding is regarded as an important and happy event, and the union of Pimpelina with the Knight was hailed with joy by her subjects. All the preparations were made, everything was ready, and no one took greater interest in the arrangements than did the Fairy Prince. And now the happy hour had come, and merry bells sent forth their joyous peals in honour of the occasion. The happiness which reigned around seemed to be contagious, for the birds caught the infection, and carolled their blithest lays, whilst the

fountains seemed to murmur a music sweeter than their own.

Pimpelina looked more beautiful and happier than ever. She was radiant with delight, for the love she bore the Knight filled her heart with joy. She was arrayed as a fairy ought to be—in a dress which was soft as silk, and airy as a sunbeam. Her golden tresses hung down to her waist, crowned with a chaplet of pearls.

Siegfried was attired in the suit made by the Black Dwarf, and looked as handsome and brave a bridegroom as one could wish to see. He, too, was brimful of happiness, and was impatient for the moment when he should become the consort of Pimpelina.

The ceremony was to take place in the grand saloon of the palace, and of course the fairies flocked there to witness it. It was evident that the ladies had not neglected to make themselves look as pretty and engaging as possible.

> "Their rich attire so different; yet so well
> Becoming her that wore it, none could tell
> Which was the fairest, which the handsomest decked."

Nor had those of the other sex omitted to devote similar attentions to their personal appearance. Even

the Dwarf seemed to have outdone all his previous efforts in displaying the charms (such as they were) of his person for admiration, while the Count evinced a fastidiousness that amused rather than surprised the Knight.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Siegfried, as he observed with what care and taste his friend had attired himself; "thy appearance betokens more than ordinary care in the attirement of thy person, and I have a shrewd suspicion that a certain lady-in-waiting will admire the result of thy pains, eh?"

"'Tis a humour that's catching," replied the Count.

"Well, well," said Siegfried, "I wish thee success in thy suit, and a happy issue out of thy affliction."

"The first is at least assured," said the Count; "for it is no secret that Mametta returns my love."

"And when is the happy event to take place?"

"This very day, if the Queen withdraw not her sanction," said the Count.

"What!" exclaimed Siegfried; "and I not to have known it."

"Then both contrived to keep a secret."

"How so?" asked the Knight.

"Because Pimpelina has herself expressed a wish that her own wedding-day should be ours."

Siegfried shook his friend's hand, and warmly congratulated him upon his approaching marriage.

"Hark! the band is playing, so we must hasten to the palace," said the Knight; and the two entered a beautiful carriage which was awaiting them. It was drawn by two cream-coloured steeds of perfect proportions, driven by a coachman who had a bouquet of forget-me-nots attached to his whip.

They drove to the palace, and took their places in the saloon to await the coming of their brides. Nor had they long to wait, for Pimpelina, accompanied by Mametta and others of her court, shortly afterwards entered; and the Grasshoppers, which were stationed near the dais on which the ceremony was to be performed, welcomed them with music befitting the occasion. Ah! what a glorious sight it was! The magnificent saloon lighted up with the radiance of diamonds and other precious stones which studded the roof; the throng of fairies clad in robes of brightest hues; and the grasshoppers playing music sweet and touching; Pimpelina, radiant in her peerless beauty, and Mametta hardly less engaging; the Knight and his friend, proud, yet courteous, in their

bearing; and the Prince again happy in the confidence of his Queen, and offering hearty congratulations to his successful rival and friend. Before the ceremony—which was to be a very short and simple pledge of troth — began, Pimpelina extended her pardon to Rumpelheim, who had sorely repented of his sinful folly — an act of grace which was received with approval by her subjects, who, though indignant at his conduct, were yet grieved at his punishment, and rejoiced at his assured return amongst them.

Even Flip was present, being perched upon Elberich's shoulder, and looking as though it pitied the poor deluded fairies for making such a fuss over so trivial an event as even a royal wedding. It had, however, the good sense to remain quiet, and to keep its thoughts to itself, much to the satisfaction of the Dwarf, who was rather apprehensive that Flip would interrupt the ceremony by an untimely couplet about the fate of the wicked fox.

And now the music ceased, and the hum of voices was stilled. The Fairy Prince, who was to receive their plighted troth — for fairies have no priests—advanced in front of Pimpelina and Siegfried—near whom stood the Count and Mametta—and, joining

the right hands of each couple, thus addressed them: "Will ye, that ye pledge to each other your troth in token of your love and desire to be henceforth as one? Will ye this?"

* * * * *

"Oh! what a pleasant dream I have had," said the Knight, regaining consciousness, and rubbing his eyes. When he looked around he saw Elberich smiling complacently upon him, and the horses and Jerusalem pony quietly nibbling the herbage in happy ignorance of what had occurred.

The Count arose almost at the same moment as his friend, and looked round in surprise.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Elberich, "so you have returned at length to consciousness."

"Alas!" replied the Knight in a regretful tone, "I thought myself in Fairy-Land. Would it were no dream. Poor Pimpelina! Gone! alas, for ever!"

"And the Count?"

"Was with me in Fairy-Land. Poor Mametta! She, too, lost for ever!"

"Nay, Siegfried," said the Count, who had also regained consciousness, "my visions were not of Fairy-Land, but of strange encounters it would take long to relate."

The day was getting far advanced, and as the sun would soon be flooding the western horizon with its golden rays the travellers hastened away in search of a resting-place for the night—each busily recalling the strange adventures which they found it difficult to believe were only the phantoms of a dream.

THE END.

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